



*Aboriginal news from across Turtle Island and beyond*  
**February 12 – 19, 2016**

## **Table of Contents**

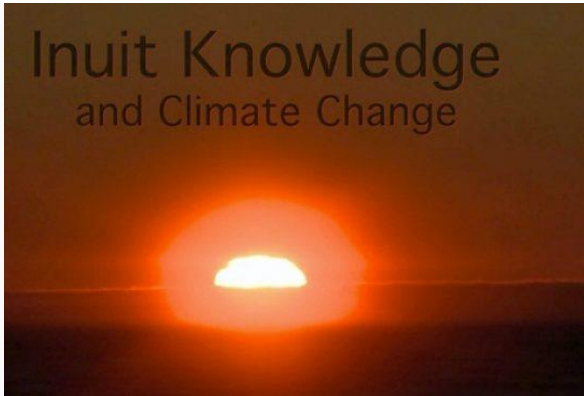
The following news stories are divided into the following sections.

<b>Aboriginal Arts &amp; Culture</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Aboriginal Business &amp; Finance</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Aboriginal Community Development</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Aboriginal Crime, Justice &amp; Law Enforcement</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>Aboriginal Education &amp; Youth</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>Aboriginal Health</b>	<b>102</b>
<b>Aboriginal History</b>	<b>116</b>
<b>Aboriginal Identity &amp; Representation</b>	<b>119</b>
<b>Aboriginal Politics</b>	<b>139</b>
<b>Aboriginal Sports</b>	<b>146</b>
<b>Energy, the Environment &amp; Natural Resources</b>	<b>148</b>
<b>Land Claims &amp; Treaty Rights</b>	<b>160</b>
<b>Special Topic: Missing &amp; Murdered Indigenous Women</b>	<b>172</b>
<b>Special Topic: Residential Schools, TRC, &amp; '60s Scoop</b>	<b>208</b>
<b>Special Topic: International Indigenous Populations</b>	<b>210</b>

# Aboriginal Arts & Culture

## Indigenous-themed film festival in Berlin to feature Winnipegger's work

"Qapirangajuq: Inuit Knowledge and Climate Change" is screening next week at the Berlin International Film Festival.



By: **Braeden Jones** Metro Published on Fri Feb 12 2016

A locally produced film is bound for one of the biggest film festivals in the world , reaching new heights of success six years after being finished.

Ian Mauro of Winnipeg co-produced *Qapirangajuq: Inuit Knowledge and Climate Change* with Zacharis Kunuk—the director of *Atanarjuat The Fast Runner*—in 2010.

It had a good run of screenings earlier, running at the Smithsonian Institution and being featured by National Geographic, and screening several times in Winnipeg, but “six years later (the film) is getting its biggest release yet,” Mauro said.

*Qapirangaju* is set to screen next week, by invitation, at the 66<sup>th</sup> Berlin International Film Festival, Berlinale.

“As a film maker I’m humbled... that a film we made is continuing to inspire audiences and be part of a conversation,” Mauro said. “I think that it shows the film is viewed as being an important part of creating awareness.”

The film is the world’s first Inuktitut language climate change film.

It explores the social and ecological impacts of climate change from the perspective of elders and hunters in Canada’s north.

“In the climate change narrative it’s usually the scientists we hear from, and this film really privileges that human experience,” Mauro said. “Climate change is such a huge

issue, the impact on Indigenous peoples is increasingly recognized and in the European context this film is still hitting all of the right notes.”

This year’s Berlinale film festival is themed as “A Journey into Indigenous Cinema,” and *Qapirangajuq* will be one of the IMAX screen features.

“To get an IMAX screen in the middle of the Berlinale is quite humbling,” Mauro said.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.metronews.ca/news/winnipeg/2016/02/11/winnipeg-made-inuit-climate-change-film-screens-in-berlin.html>

## Staying warm with stories

SAM MACDONALD / ESTEVAN LIFESTYLES

FEBRUARY 12, 2016 11:03 AM



Carol Daniels, an artist, writer and storyteller, leads a drum song as part of a presentation to elementary students at the Leisure Centre, on Wednesday. Sam Macdonald photo

Historically, February has been one of the coldest months of the year. Carol Daniels described it as the best time to gather together, stay warm and tell stories. She did just that on Wednesday, at the Estevan Leisure Centre, to a crowd of elementary students who were very eager to listen.

Daniels, an artist, writer and storyteller, told a story to children about friendship and adventure, focused on the life of a girl named Nahanni, whose story takes place in northern Saskatchewan.

“The best thing to do is stay inside, enjoy each other’s company and tell one another stories in February,” said Daniels. “I’m happy to see that tradition continue.”

Daniels’ story and presentation served as a platform to educate children about the Cree and Dene cultures in which she was raised. Daniels showed children aboriginal art and taught them about the Cree language.

The story Daniels told was one she created herself for her own children. She said that when they were younger, she would read to them every night, and that's how she became inspired.

"I would always read stuff like *Green Eggs and Ham*, or stuff by Robert Munsch, to my children. And it occurred to me that there was almost nothing in terms of First Nations children's literature," said Daniels. "I figured there's no point in complaining if I'm able to come up with a solution."

Daniels' solution was to craft stories herself to educate her children about their culture. Those stories became the ones she tells, travelling across the province to educate people about the Saskatchewan First Nations cultures.

Daniels led a couple of group participation activities in which she and the children sang a traditional drum song, and later everyone took part in a round dance around the room. "When my children were little, we used to sing with the drum all the time," said Daniels. "In fact, a lot of the songs that I do, I will often use Cree language in them, because I figured it was an easier way of teaching literacy and the language. It's more fun to sing than it is to just read it in a book."

Daniels does three to four presentations a day in southeast, and parts of eastern Saskatchewan; and she does presentations for young and old people alike. Wednesday was no exception. She had only finished leading the round dance, and already had plans to visit one of the seniors' homes in Estevan immediately afterward.

"You need to stimulate a child's imagination," said Daniels. "I made these stories because they're fun."

- See more at: <http://www.sasklifestyles.com/entertainment/arts-culture/staying-warm-with-stories-1.2171682#sthash.qN8fg4VI.dpuf>

## Aboriginal writing, arts contest in 12th year

by Martin Dunphy on February 11th, 2016 at 5:06 PM



The entry deadline for this year's Aboriginal Arts & Stories competition has been set at March 31.

The contest, billed as "the largest and most recognized art and creative-writing competition in Canada for aboriginal youth", debuted in 2005 as the Canadian Aboriginal Writing and Arts Challenge.

That challenge itself was inspired by the success of the 2005 book *Our Story: Aboriginal Voices on Canada's Past*, which collected original stories by some of the country's best-known indigenous writers—including Tantoo Cardinal, Tomson Highway, Drew Hayden Taylor, Lee Maracle, and Thomas King—exploring important events in Canada's past from a First Nations perspective.

About halfway through its existence, the contest changed from being solely a creative-writing program to one that included artistic contributions in photography, painting, and drawing.

Since its inception, the competition has attracted more than 2,500 participants from Canada's provinces and territories. Eligibility is restricted to "Canadians of aboriginal ancestry (self-identified, Status, non-Status, Inuit, and Metis) between the ages of 9 and 29", according to guidelines published on the contest's [website](#).

First-place winners in both arts and writing in two age categories receive \$2,000 each and a trip for two to the award ceremony. Writing winners get their stories published in *Canada's History Magazine*, and arts winners receive an opportunity to exhibit their work.

The program is run by the Toronto-based charitable organization [Historica Canada](#), which calls itself "the largest independent organization devoted to enhancing awareness of Canadian history and citizenship", and which runs other programs that it claims reach eight million Canadians every year.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.straight.com/blog/637126/aboriginal-writing-arts-contest-12th-year>

## **Mohawk broadcaster Janet Rogers launches NDNs on the Airwaves**

**Indigenous radio programming has come a long way, says Rogers**

By Stephanie Cram, [CBC News](#) Posted: Feb 13, 2016 5:00 AM ET Last Updated: Feb 13, 2016 5:00 AM ET



Radio producer and writer Janet Rogers has created a podcast series that looks to answer, what is indigenous radio? (Janet Rogers)

From the early uses of radio on reserves to communicate with hunters in the bush, to the creation of podcasts that explore indigenous arts, culture and politics — indigenous broadcasters have adapted with the times.

"Indigenous voices on the land and on the airwaves is another way to create presence," says Mohawk writer and radio producer Janet Rogers.

Roger's decision to go into radio 10 years ago was motivated by the desire to create a space for indigenous voices to be heard.

"Without authentic indigenous voices on the airwaves ... we'd be really missing something in terms of what we're offered in the mainstream media."



Janet Rogers produced a new podcast that looks to answer, what is indigenous radio? (Courtesy of Janet Rogers)

Her newest passion project is *NDNs on the Airwaves*, a seven-part podcast that looks at the current state of Canadian indigenous radio.

The podcast takes the listener from a commercial radio station that is 100 per cent indigenous owned, to a community radio station in Six Nations, Ontario, to CBC's *Unreserved*.

Rogers also interviews some of Canada's top indigenous media makers from television, radio and podcasting, as she attempts to answer: what is indigenous radio?

## **Radio as a communication tool**

In First Nation communities, the local radio station is a place where anyone can come to make an announcement, or perform a song live on-air.

The uniqueness of reserve radio stations comes up several times in Rogers radio documentary, and really speaks to how indigenous people are using the medium differently than the mainstream.

One of the ways radio is used differently on reserves is to communicate with people out in the bush — which still happens today in communities without cell phone reception.

"Radio was really just a telephone, that helped to share messages from their little communities out into the bush," said Rogers.

"They'd have messages like, bring home some diapers, or your wife is having her baby come back from the trap line."

## **Keeping language and culture alive**

Today radio also plays an important role in keeping many traditional indigenous languages alive.

In the podcast Rogers interviews Native Communications Inc. CEO David McLeod about how their programming keeps indigenous voices on the airwaves.

"We have Cree and Ojibwe language programming, and the language itself carries cultures," says McLeod.





Multimedia artist Jackson Twobears and NCI CEO David McLeod with NDNs on the Airwaves producer Janet Rogers. (Courtesy of Janet Rogers)

"It's not so much preserving a language, it's about keeping the languages alive and communicating in those languages, which I think that radio does so well."

Rogers also interviews Ryan McMahon, who is the voice behind the podcast, *Red Man Laughing*. For McMahon, radio should reflect the voices of our country – as diverse as they may be.

"I guess when I think back to my earliest contact with radio, I just always loved that your community or your voice seemed reflected in it," said McMahon.

"Something about local radio gives you a sense of belonging, a sense of home."

## The future of indigenous radio

"Even though it's an eight part documentary series, there's still a lot more stories that have yet to be told about radio," said Rogers.

With many stories to be told, Rogers believes indigenous voices will continue to lead the way when it comes to innovation in radio.

"[Indigenous radio producers] are completely embracing the technologies that are available to everyone else out there," said Rogers.

"And as a result, we're just going to keep creating presence using webcasting, satellite, podcasting, all that."

**NDN's on the Airwaves -- Sizzle Reel** from **Jackson 2bears** on **Vimeo**.

---

Janet Roger's seven part podcast, **NDNs on the Airwaves** can be streamed now. She also hosts *Native Waves Radio* on CFUV in Victoria, B.C.



**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/mohawk-broadcaster-janet-rogers-launches-ndns-on-the-airwaves-1.3444557>

# Indigenous Saskatoon flute makes appearance at NBA All-Star game

**Native American flutist playing alongside Nelly Furtado using a flute crafted in Saskatoon**

CBC News Posted: Feb 14, 2016 1:44 PM CT Last Updated: Feb 16, 2016 7:27 AM CT



Tony Duncan, pictured with Nelly Furtado, holds the flute crafted by Saskatoon's Richard Dubé. (Tony Duncan/Facebook)

A little bit of Saskatoon will be making an appearance during today's NBA All-Star game.

Indigenous North American flutist, **Tony Duncan**, will be playing alongside Nelly Furtado during a performance of Canada's national anthem. During the duo's rendition of O Canada, a hometown flute, made by Saskatoon's Richard Dubé, will be played by Duncan.

In 2014, Dubé met Duncan during the World Flute Society convention; he gifted Duncan a flute.

"He really liked the flute," said Dubé. "He like the sound, he liked how well it was tuned, and how easy it was to play."

About a week ago, Dubé received a call from Duncan asking for a special order.

"He told me he had this gig playing O Canada with Nelly Furtado at the NBA All-Star game on [Sunday]," explained Dubé. "So I said, 'well, I don't have one in the right key for you but you know, I'll give it a shot and make one for you.'"

Dubé handcrafted the personalized instrument over the course of 24 hours.

"At first, I didn't think I could really do anything for him, but then I took on the challenge and yeah, it's kind of cool," he said.

Dubé got his start making flutes in the early 2000's as an inner city school teacher at Pleasant Hill Community School. As a teaching tool, he had his students learn to make and play an indigenous version of the instrument.

"I saw that it had a really strong impact with my kids," said Dubé. "A lot of kids had a really tough shell around themselves, and the flute was something that the kids would let kind of penetrate that shell, and it would help them to connect with the best part of themselves."

"Over 96 per cent of the kids at Pleasant Hill were aboriginal, so it made a lot of sense to me to make a flute from this continent that would have a closer connection to my First Nations kids."

Dubé said the process of making the instrument took a lot of trial and error to perfect, as well as a lot of tips and advice from professional flute makers. But after about 15 years of crafting, it's really paying off.

"It's really nice to know that an instrument that I really made for kids first is something that a professional musician likes so much that he wants to use on a live performance for a big stage."

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/indigenous-saskatoon-flute-makes-appearance-at-nba-all-star-game-1.3448018>

## Translating an Inuit tale: How many words does Marathi have for ice?

Written in Inuktitut in 1969, Canada's first Inuit novel 'Harpoon of the Hunter' has made its Indian debut in Hindi and Marathi.

**Mridula Chari** · Yesterday · 08:30 am



Kamik was wandering in the middle of a desert of ice and snow when a savage polar bear emerged out of nowhere to kill the dogs that had been pulling the sled of the group of hunters he was travelling with. The hunters decided that the bear must die.

So begins *Harpoon of the Hunter*, the first novel in Inuktitut, the language of the Inuit in Canada. Written by an Inuit named Markoosie, the novel was originally published in a journal in 1969. It was a landmark book for many reasons, not least because it was the first time that an Inuit oral narrative in Canada had been formally published on paper.

Now imagine reading this rare work in Marathi or Hindi.

In January, the University of Mumbai, in collaboration with the University of Montreal, launched translations of Markoosie's work in Hindi (*Shikari ka harpoon* with Sanjay Kumar) and in Marathi (*Shikaryacha bhala* with Jayant Dhupkar). These are the first translations into any Indian language of an aboriginal book from North America, said Daniel Chartier, the coordinating professor of the project at the Montreal University. Chartier described the launch as “historical for the Inuit all over the world”.

Inuktitut is the language spoken by the Inuit, who live in the northernmost areas of the world. There are only 11,000 Inuit in Quebec and 50,000 around the world. As Inuktitut is primarily an oral language, the Inuit began to write it down in self-developed scripts only very recently.



Members of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference. Image via Wikimedia Commons.

**Bringing back a story**

The translation project began with an academic exchange, as Vidya Vencatesan, head of the department of French at Mumbai University, travelled to Montreal in 2012.

“Whenever I travel, I always come back with a song, a story and a recipe,” she said. “In 2011, they had brought out a bilingual edition of the original book with Inuktitut on one side and French on the other. Professor Chartier asked if we could consider a translation from French into Marathi. That was when I realised no work in Inuktitut had ever been translated here.”

The 2011 bilingual edition Vencatesan was given was the first time that the story had been printed as a separate book in Inuktitut.

On her return, Vencatesan decided to pursue the project. Mumbai University was flush with funds at that time and she secured a small budget for the translations. Two French professors and veteran translators at the English and Foreign Languages University in Hyderabad stepped up to the task: Jayant Dhupkar for Marathi and Sanjay Kumar for Hindi.

The two translators worked from French, consulting with Markoosie via Chartier about the meanings of words and references. For around two years, the two translators worked independently, each arriving at a different process.

As a result, one deviation lies in the different titles of the two books. The Hindi version is called *Shikari ka harpoon* and the Marathi one is *Shikaryacha bhala*. Dhupkar wanted to use the Marathi word for an implement similar to the harpoon. Kumar, however, decided to retain the English word to retain its essence.

“We are all humans working against nature,” said Dhupkar. “Nature is not democratic. It is unpredictable and you don’t have full knowledge of it. How do you understand that struggle? That is very critical to the book.”

Translating between such vastly different cultures also meant that several references familiar to the Inuit would have no resonance for Indians without adequate explanation. A solution for this was to use photographs.

“The major difficulty was for the Indian readers to understand the relationship between the Inuit characters and their natural environment, made of snow, cold, ice, igloos and of course of different animals, like seals, polar bears,” said Chartier. “We decided to add photographs to the novel, so the Indian reader could better understand the action.”

## **Working in French**

The book is translated into Marathi and Hindi not via English, but French. For the two translators, this was the natural way to go. Dhupkar is no lightweight in translations between Marathi and French. In 1993, he translated Gustave Flaubert's seminal *Madame Bovary* into Marathi. His other achievements over the years include translating Molière into Marathi and Namdeo Dhasal into French.

"There is not much money in literary translations, but you feel like doing it because of a concern for culture," Dhupkar said.

When he read the French translation of Markoosie's book, he found few problems in following the references, apart from a few words that were retained from Inuktitut. The initial translation took Dhupkar two months, after which began the editing.

"It was a whole world that we knew nothing about," Vencatesan said. "It was a tale of courage, a tale of people who are slowly becoming museumised. This was a world before Eurocentric civilisation happened. It was a deeply moving story and somehow I think an Indian reader will find it easy to identify with."

**Direct Link:** <http://scroll.in/article/803453/translating-an-inuit-tale-how-many-words-does-marathi-have-for-ice>

## Peter Etulu Aningmiuq, Inuk singer-songwriter, dies at 69

CBC News Posted: Feb 17, 2016 11:18 AM CT Last Updated: Feb 17, 2016 2:38 PM CT



Singer-songwriter Peter Etulu Aningmiuq surrounded by family in hospital. He died Tuesday in Iqaluit after battling cancer. (submitted)

Nunavut's legendary singer-songwriter Peter Etulu Aningmiuq died Tuesday in Iqaluit at age 69.

He was diagnosed with cancer in November.

He is survived by his wife Elisapee and her four children. He also has three children with his late wife, Susan. and several grandchildren.

Aningmiuq was responsible for such **Inuktitut-language classics as Fishing Trip.**

The funeral will be held in Iqaluit. A date has not yet been set.



Aningmiuq penned several classic Inuktitut country songs. (CBC Music)

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/etulu-aningmiuq-dies-1.3451834>

## **Beatrice Deer lends star power to Inuktitut songwriting contest**

**Winner will receive \$1K and get the chance to record their song in a professional studio**

CBC News Posted: Feb 16, 2016 1:29 PM CT Last Updated: Feb 16, 2016 8:49 PM CT



'In everyday life, whether we realize it or not, we persevere, just to keep up with our day to day lives.' Popular singer-songwriter Beatrice Deer stars in a new video to promote a Nunavik-based songwriting contest. (Submitted by Esuma)

A new Inuktitut songwriting contest is challenging Inuit in Northern Quebec to share their stories about persevering through challenging times — and it's getting support from Nunavik's popular singer-songwriter Beatrice Deer.

The contest, which coincides with the annual School Perseverance Week in Quebec, was launched with a video of Deer, showing shots of herself in a music studio. It is



interspersed with interview clips and images of young people playing sports and competing in traditional Inuit games.

"In everyday life, whether we realize it or not, we persevere, just to keep up with our day-to-day lives," said Deer in an interview on QulliQ, CBC Nunavut's morning show.

"Sometimes when life is a little bit more difficult or extremely difficult, we just get up and continue. And that's perseverance."

The winning song will be happy and energetic, said Deer, with a focus on how Inuit can work through challenges that "lead us down the wrong path."

"I haven't lead an easy life," said the singer who is also a program officer with the Aumaaggiivik Nunavik Arts Secretariat.

"I went through many obstacles, but by choosing to take the support of my family, friends and community, I persevered."

To enter the contest, you must be a beneficiary of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, but non-beneficiaries can act as co-authors.

The winner will receive a \$1,000 cash prize and a free trip to record the song in a professional studio.

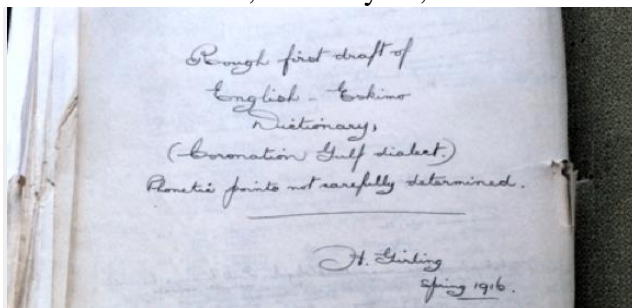
The contest is being organized through the Aumaaggiivik Nunavik Arts Secretariat, which is part of the Avataq Cultural Institute, and through Esuma, a Kativik Regional Government program that aims to support students.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/beatrice-deer-nunavik-songwriting-challenge-1.3450215>

## Nunavut trio aim to produce Inuinnaqtun dictionary from historic documents

**"It would be such an honour if we continue the work, and actually finish it"**

LISA GREGOIRE, February 17, 2016 - 10:00 am



"Rough first draft of English-Eskimo Dictionary, Coronation Gulf dialect. Phonetic points not carefully



determined." H. Girling, spring 1916. An excerpt from one of the documents given to Millie Kuliktana by the family of late Anglican Bishop John Sperry. (PHOTO BY MILLIE KULIKTANA)



Millie Kuliktana, project lead from Inuinnaith Services Ltd. in Kugluktuk, will be meeting with Anglican archivists in Toronto in March to figure out how to reproduce a 100-year-old dictionary of Inuinnaqtun terms produced by Reverend Herbert Girling. (PHOTO COURTESY MILLIE KULIKTANA)

Sometimes a project falls into your lap and kind of changes your life.

That's what happened to Millie Kuliktana, Inuinnaqtun language champion and educator from Kugluktuk, when she was in Edmonton for medical treatment in the spring of 2015.

"I was very taken aback. It brought tears to my eyes, having been given such trust," said Kuliktana.

She's talking about more than 100 fragile pages of Inuinnaqtun words, some handwritten, some typed, which were given to her a year ago by the family of the late Anglican minister John (Jack) Sperry, who died in 2012, but remains known for his translations of the Bible, hymn and psalms into Inuinnaqtun.

Sperry, a respected Christian leader, served parishes in Kugluktuk — then Coppermine — and Fort Smith in the 1950s and 1960s, and later served as an Anglican bishop from 1973 to 1990.

The homemade dictionary had been passed on to Sperry by his predecessor, Anglican Rev. Herbert Girling, who began compiling the words in the early 1900s from the Copper Inuit he served.

When Sperry died in Hay River, Feb. 11, 2012, his family went through his possessions and came across Girling's Inuinnaqtun dictionary. His family members chose to give the dictionary to Kuliktana, trusting that she would know what to do with it.

The first thing Kuliktana has to do: find a way to reproduce working copies of the fragile 100-year-old pages so the originals can be preserved intact.

Then she, along with Inuinnaith Services Ltd. business partners Edna Elias and Susie Evyagotailak, will find a way to publish the work in book form, so Inuinnaqtun speakers and those who want to learn the language can have a historical record of their language.

Some of those words are old, Kuliktana told *Nunatsiaq News*, and not really in use anymore: These include nearly forgotten Inuit place names, kinship terms and lists of terminology used at the time in small Inuit camps.

“A lot are just life words, actual nouns and verbs of what was in their lives at the time,” Kuliktana said. “Some of the actions would pertain to dog teams, modes of travel, and how they went about their iglu village.”

In that way, the collection is like a time capsule, she said, preserving the history of a language in serious decline.

“It would be such an honour if we continue the work, and actually finish it, so the people of the North can have a document they can use for their children and for their families, and for education as well,” Kuliktana said.

With a \$10,000 grant from a BHP Billiton Diamonds Inuit benefits agreement, Kuliktana and her partners will take a trip to Toronto in March to meet Anglican church archivists and the Anglican church’s publishing arm to talk about next steps.

Kuliktana said when she contacted officials with the Anglican diocesan archives, they were thrilled about the dictionary. And archivist was already working on a Girling project, so the timing couldn’t have been better.

Kuliktana said she will have a better idea of timeline and scope of the project after the meeting next month in Toronto. Then she’ll have to find funding to see the project through to its publication.

She’s hoping to track down the descendants of the Copper Inuit who taught Inuinnaqtun to Girling and Sperry, as well as contact local elders, to gather input and ensure the language terms used are correct because some of the words are spelled phonetically.

While the dictionary doesn’t list the language contributors, there is a long history of occupation in the area — anthropologists such as Diamond Jenness recorded lists of Copper Inuit families who lived in the western Arctic.

Kuliktana is hoping to reproduce the original words, as these were handwritten or typed up, and then, on the facing page, the modern word or term, all written in Roman orthography.

Then, she has to find a home for the original documents. The Sperry family has asked that she not give up ownership of the historic papers so Kuliktana said she has to track down an institution willing to hold and preserve them on her behalf.

“It’s overwhelming. I want to honour the work that the Anglican ministry has done to start this project, to be the first to start collecting Inuit terminology 100 years ago.”

**Direct Link:**

[http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674nunavut\\_trio\\_producing\\_inuinnaqtun\\_dictionary\\_from\\_historic\\_documents/](http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674nunavut_trio_producing_inuinnaqtun_dictionary_from_historic_documents/)

## Tracey Lindberg on her dream moose meat dinner party

Wednesday, February 17, 2016

**Tracey Lindberg's** debut novel *Birdie* will enter the **2016 Canada Reads** ring with defender **Bruce Poon Tip**. *Birdie* tells the remarkable tale of Bernice Meetoos, a Cree woman struggling to recover from an abusive past.

As Canada Reads nears, we challenged Lindberg to take our patented **Magic 8 Q&A**, fielding questions from Canada's best and brightest authors.



**1. Karen Solie asks, "Do you remember who you were reading when you first realized, not that you wanted to be a writer, but that you were intrigued by writing and what it can do?"**

This is such a coincidence, I was thinking of it only this morning, Karen. I remember reading Judy Blume as a child (8 or 9?) and thinking, "Here is an adult, writing as a kid, for kids. She has done something hard." I know that I thought it was remarkable to be able to capture kids' voices, fears and joys. Within that, something about possible futures formed, I think.

**2. Paul Yee asks, "Do you think it's harder to write funny stories than serious ones?"**

Thank you for this, Paul. I think it is harder to try to write funny stories - that stuff, the ribald, fierce inconsistencies, irony and quiet jest are so finely hewn and personally intuitive that they are hard to capture and create with intent. In my work, they have to be either the lid on a pot of fury or a ladle in the stewing angst. In this regard, maybe it is harder for me to write funny because I think the funniest things come out of things happening and mixing up at the other end of the emotional spectrum. Absurdity. Gallows humour. Profundity in pain. In truth, I weigh in on the side of sadness and that might be easier for me as a result.

**3. Jane Urquhart asks: "Could you write a novel about two square meters of outdoor space? (urban, rural, or wilderness)"**

Oh gosh. That does make you think. Perhaps. Writing about a rich inner life and the collapsing and moving of space and time might allow for some movement that the physical allotment does not. Mental and spiritual traveling are rich, rich pieces of our

existence, but there is so much to be learned from place, home, body corporeal. No, on second thought: I could probably not do this well. My attention span could not allow for it. And. No one wants to read anything that the author can't describe fully.

**4. Lori Lansens asks, "If you could have dinner with one of your literary heroes, living or dead, who would it be? Where would you eat? What, besides books, would you talk about?"**

Big brains and big hearts change the world. If I get to choose the company, I think I would want more time with the late Harold Cardinal (author of *The Unjust Society*, *The Rebirth of Canada's Indians*, and co-author of *Treaty Elders of Saskatchewan: Our Dream Is That Our Peoples Will One Day Be Clearly Recognized as Nations*). His books were some of the most powerful iterations of indigenous political philosophies and strengths - and outlined the colonial challenges. He was a brilliant intellectual and a good leader. He was also just a repository of stories about life, our people and where we come from. He was flawed, funny and human and a great conversationalist. I would love to hear from him about the rejuvenation of our legal orders and about his ideas and thoughts on the young Trudeau's nation to nation conversation with indigenous peoples. It would be thrilling to hear what he thinks of the role of artists in changing the conversation and his ideas about our evolving political life as citizens of our Nations.

We would eat at Billy-Ray Belcourt's house because I need an excuse to add him to this conversation. Those two, let alone what I could add to or take from the conversation, would challenge and enjoy each other immensely, I think. Billy-Ray is a beautiful, spectacular intellect whose combination of gentle kindness and hard truth delivery would resonate and stir my late friend, Dr. Cardinal. He might not get Billy-Ray's poetry but he would be actively engaged and challenged by his brain and the many formats within which he lets out his magnificent ideas.

We'd have moose meat, boiled potatoes and bannock. And tea. Lots of tea.

**5. Shani Mootoo asks, "How do your closest family members treat you, you the published - hopefully famous - author?"**

Well, this makes me think and feel, Shani. My family has always treated me like I am remarkable. Remarkable does come with it a number of other adjectives and synonyms (curious, funky, kooky, peculiar, strange), but in its most adoring configuration, I get lots of time with my nieces and nephews. Book writing is just another odd thing I do. Like law school. Moving to the United States for grad school. Going to Harvard. Getting a doctorate. Singing in a band. They are proud, but they did not get the book until months after it came out or have not seen it yet. No particular reasons, it's just what we do. My extended family are similarly proud of me and my community is exceptionally important. The Kelly Lake Cree Nation held a dinner, let me read, gifted me with gifts exceptionally dear to our peoples, and lift me up and hold me out. I hope I do the same for my family, extended family and Nation.

**6. George Elliott Clarke asks, "What literary character would you like to seduce - or be seduced by?"**

Seduction to me is one of two things: cheap or meaningful (and therefore, personal). And, I am not having either conversation with the CBC. Sorry, George!

**7. Lawrence Hill asks, "What is the worst job you ever had, and what kind of good material did it give you?"**

Hmmm. I want to know Lawrence's worst job! My answer would have been entirely different until two years ago. I will give you the two year-old answer: my worst job was as a karaoke host in a bar. In a small town bar. In a small northern town bar. Talent was...a gift, when found. Over-familiarity was, however, abundant. People walking around with the microphone in their pocket, into the washrooms and yelling "Beat it! Not the song! You." The material, I suppose was about the impermanence and lack of resonance in public shaming. Mostly, people are just happy it is not them. Also: alcohol has good spirit and bad spirit in it. Oh, and: you don't get to drink on the job just because your job is in a bar.

**8. Joan Clark asks: "What part does the subconscious play when you are writing fiction?"**

A good story, this one. I am not a Cree speaker. My fluency extends to toddler facilitation of activities: open doors, come here, go away, eat, sit, speak, be quiet, love. So, while writing *Birdie*, I relied upon the language I know, Cree speakers I know and Cree dictionaries. It was challenging and I struggled here and there, but really tried to open myself to the possibility that the words I did not have would find me. "Blood memories" I think N. Scott Momoday has called it. In any event, I chose names familiar to me, but not necessarily from communities I have lived in. I chose Bernice's last name "Meetoos" as it sounded soft and final, like punctuation. I had done a draft and delivered it to a Cree-speaking elder for review before going to my editor.

"You know Meetoos means tree, eh?" I didn't.

The arc in the book about the tree of life and the tie between women and the land was not merely in my conscious mind when I named Bernice. However, that innermost intuitive voice knew who she was and how she would grow. So, to that degree (and I don't think we get to know what is from our subconscious until someone or some event clarifies it later) I suppose the subconscious enriches and enlarges my work. Time will tell. Thank you, Joan!

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/books/2016/02/tracey-lindberg-magic-8.html>

## **B.C. First Nations artist inspires unique, eco-conscious fashion show**

Valentina Ruiz Leotaud

Feb 17th, 2016



*Ravens, Eagles, Polka Dots fashion show. Photo by Valentina Ruiz Leotaud.*

Over the course of an artistic career spanning 40 years, Haida artist Reg Davidson has carved masks and sculptures, painted drums, produced gold jewelry, and even sewed traditional regalia. If there was one thing missing from his bucket list, that was being the muse of a fashion designer.

That all changed when Wendy Van Riesen came into his life. The creator of the eco-conscious clothing line Dahlia Drive was visiting Haida Gwaii when she met Davidson at a potlatch, and then visited his workshop. Van Riesen was blown away by the Haida artist's work, which is inspired by Indigenous legends. She decided to put the designs into a new, wearable format, in the form of clothing.



**Reg Davidson. Photo by Valentina Ruiz Leotaud.**

The professional collaboration between the two started in July of 2015, and the final product was presented in an informal runway show held at Vancouver's Skwachay's Lodge. The collection was named *Ravens, Eagles, Polka Dots: A Reg Davidson/Dahlia Drive Collaboration* and it is based on Davidson's "Raven Dancing" silkscreen and



“Eagle Drum” painting. At the core of it all is “the story of a friendship,” Van Riesen said.

Models of all sizes and ages wore see-through blouses and dresses, with colours evoking the blacks, reds, whites, and blues on Davidson’s prints and poles. Recycled curtain sheers and slips were used to create the garments.



**Cecilia Point, member of the Musqueam Indian Band and Aboriginal Tourism B.C. rep.  
Photo by Valentina Ruiz Leotaud.**

“I’ve been doing my art since 1972, and all the pieces I do are for collectors. Once they are bought, nobody sees them, right? And so, when the designs go on clothing, when you go to events, you get to see the designs been worn and other people will get to see them,” Davidson said. He added that he experienced a similar feeling when four of his mythical red cedar sculptures were unveiled at the Vancouver International Airport earlier this year.

“You are bringing our art and our culture beyond our village, and it’s allowing more people to understand and appreciate it,” he said.



**Designer Wendy Van Riesen and one of her models. Photo by Valentina Ruiz Leotaud.**





**Welcoming ceremony. Photo by Valentina Ruiz Leotaud.**



**Model wearing overgarment. Photo by Valentina Ruiz Leotaud.**



**Runway show. Photo by Valentina Ruiz Leotaud.**



Runway show. Photo by Valentina Ruiz Leotaud.



Skwachay's Lodge art. Photo by Valentina Ruiz Leotaud.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.vancouverobserver.com/life/bc-first-nations-artist-inspires-unique-eco-conscious-fashion-show>

## **Inuit artifacts to be put on display in Winnipeg Art Gallery**

**Gallery says it plans on creating new Inuit art wing to display the new pieces**

By Hilary Bird, [CBC News](#) Posted: Feb 17, 2016 12:59 PM CT Last Updated: Feb 18, 2016 1:04 PM CT



After years in storage, 8,000 pieces of Inuit art left Yellowknife this week destined for display in the Winnipeg Art Gallery's new Inuit Art Centre. Among them is a tapestry created by Marion Tuu'luq in Baker Lake in 1974. (Chantal Dubuc/CBC)

After decades of being hidden away in a storage room in the Northwest Territories, more than 8,000 Inuit artifacts will soon be put on display at the Winnipeg Art Gallery.

The artifacts are being moved from Yellowknife's Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre to Winnipeg, through a loan agreement with the Government of Nunavut.

The WAG has the largest public collection of Inuit art in the world. It's planning on displaying the artifacts as part of the Inuit Art Centre, **which was announced in November**.

When Nunavut was founded in 1999, it was decided that the Northwest Territories would divide its extensive collection of archives and artifacts in two.

Pieces from the Eastern Arctic were given to Nunavut, however, the territory doesn't have an appropriate facility to house its share.



Artist rendering of the view from the exterior of observation lobby at the Winnipeg Art Gallery's new Inuit Art Centre (Submitted by Winnipeg Art Gallery)

The Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre in Yellowknife agreed in 2002 to store the complete collection — for approximately \$1 million a year — until Nunavut was able to build its own facility.

However, more than a decade later, **Nunavut still lacks a climate controlled facility to store the artifacts**.

In 2006, the Government of Nunavut, alongside Nunavut land claims corporation Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., announced plans to build a \$55 million heritage centre in Iqaluit, where the materials could be stored. However, the centre still hasn't been built.

Inuit objects from the Nunavut collection have not been included in any new exhibits at the Prince of Wales Centre since the territories split apart in 1999.

---

### Clarifications

- The headline of this article previously stated the artifacts were on the move 'today.' It has been clarified to reflect that the move has been ongoing.

Feb 18, 2016 11:31 AM CT

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/inuit-art-gallery-1.3451852>

## First Nations dance group sharing culture with a beat

by [Alicia Bridges - Smithers Interior News](#)  
posted Feb 18, 2016 at 9:00 AM

Adults and children in elaborate button blankets and striking masks danced to the drumbeat of Wet'suwet'en songs at the Stories in the Snow fundraiser in Smithers last week.

Traditional songs and stories were shared in a public showcase of Wet'suwet'en culture presented by the Ewk Hiyah Hozdli Dance Group on Friday.

The event was held to raise money so the dancers can travel to New Aiyansh to perform at a Nisga'a First Nation event known as "hobiye" (pronounced ho-bee-yay) from Feb. 26-27.

A Nisga'a New Year celebration, hobiye marks the return of the prized oolichan fish to the Nass Valley.

For the local dancers, it is an opportunity to share traditional Wet'suwet'en dances and songs with the Nisga'a Nation.

Ewk Hiyah Hozdli member Molly Wickham said the group's goal was to remember Wet'suwet'en culture, and to share it with the wider Bulkley Valley community.

"Because a lot of our songs and dances aren't sung anymore, and a lot of people don't remember our mass dances at all either, we've been bringing those back," she said.

“Currently our membership, the children outnumber the adults, which is awesome, it’s really amazing.”

Wickham and the other Ewk Hiyah Hozdli dancers have turned to their elders to piece together the songs and dances, and to learn to perform them properly.

“We were really fortunate to have access to those elders before they passed away,” said Wickham.

“A lot of stuff we pieced together through research and stories and talking to different elders.

“We still are learning things about the songs that we didn’t know before.”

Hear Ewk Hiyah Hozdli performing the grouse song at Stories in the Snow:

**Direct Link:** <http://www.interior-news.com/ourtown/368886741.html>

## Aboriginal Business & Finance

### **First Nations teen with perfect grades says 'anything is possible'**

**Erickson Owen, who aims to be an accountant, to speak at financial officers' national conference in Montreal**

CBC News Posted: Feb 16, 2016 6:45 AM ET Last Updated: Feb 16, 2016 11:00 AM ET



Erickson Owen, 17, from Poplar Hill First Nation says he "sacrificed" all of his evenings last fall to study and achieve his goal of earning 100 per cent in all of his classes. (Blue Earth Photography)

Erickson Owen is literally a perfect student.

The student at Pelican Falls First Nations High School, near Sioux Lookout, Ont., earned a 100 per cent average in his Grade 12 classes last semester.



"I wanted to prove to the students that anything is possible," the 17-year-old from Poplar Hill First Nation said of the reason he spent all his spare time studying last fall.

"I sacrificed my time in the evening, I had to. I read my notes over at least three times per night."

On Tuesday, Owen will address a national conference of the Aboriginal Financial Officers Association in Montreal.

He earned that opportunity after writing an award-winning essay explaining his goal of becoming an accountant.

Owen said he'll give part of the speech in his first language — Ojibway.

Asked if he'll be maintaining his 100 per cent average for his final semester of high school, Owen said, "no, I wish to relax. It was stressful trying to keep my marks up that high. [There was] lots of hard work."

Owen said he has plans to attend Confederation College in Thunder Bay next fall.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/erickson-owen-perfect-student-1.3448697>

## Aboriginal Community Development

### Major road between Edmonton and Enoch Cree First Nation renamed Maskêkosihk Trail

Maskêkosihk, meaning 'people of the land of the medicines', will apply to 23 Avenue between 215 Avenue and the Anthony Henday in the new Riverview area.



What the new road signs will look like.

By: [Alex Boyd](#) Metro Published on Fri Feb 12 2016

The road between Edmonton and the Enoch Cree First Nation is being renamed Maskêkosihk Trail, in a move Mayor Don Iveson calls a “reminder that this is shared territory.”

The Enoch Cree Nation and the City of Edmonton announced the new name jointly on Friday.

Pronounced Muss-Kay-Go-See in Cree, the new name will apply to 23 Avenue between 215 Avenue and the Anthony Henday in the new Riverview area in south Edmonton.

“This is more than just a road naming for us,” said Chief Billy Morin. “The strength of our people lies in our culture, our ways, our beliefs, our protocols and most importantly, in our language. When our language is spoken, our strength comes out.”

He said the name translates as land of the medicines or people of the medicines.

“It denotes the healing power of the land around us,” he said.

Iveson said the specific road was chosen because as the area develops it will eventually serve tens thousands of residents and will become a major gateway to both the city and the Enoch Cree Nation.

The area between 84 Street and 23 Avenue also served as a gathering place for Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples for generations, and is part of the Enoch Cree’s traditional territory.

Both leaders emphasized that in the wake of the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the renaming is a symbol of a mutual commitment to build the relationship between the two communities, and work together on issues like economic development and infrastructure.

The new name was chosen after a joint application to the Naming Committee and input from both citizens and City administration.

Iveson said it will take some time for the new signs to be installed.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.metronews.ca/news/edmonton/2016/02/12/major-edmonton-road-renamed-maskekoshk-trail.html>

## **Ontario First Nation asks federal government to replace aging ferry**





This image taken from Google Maps shows a beach on Christian Island in Ontario's Georgian Bay (Google Maps)

---

Kristy Kirkup, The Canadian Press

Published Saturday, February 13, 2016 7:48AM EST

Last Updated Saturday, February 13, 2016 8:08AM EST

OTTAWA -- An Ontario aboriginal community on an island in the southeastern portion of Georgian Bay is in danger of losing its only link to the outside world -- an aging ferry the chief of the Beausoleil First Nation says is on the verge of sinking.

Beausoleil, about 5,400 hectares of Ojibwa territory, is located primarily on Christian Island.

The picturesque First Nation -- widely considered to be one of the real-life backdrops in "The Orenda," the critically acclaimed novel by author Joseph Boyden -- is dependent on the ferry, which makes its hour-long round trip to the island and back 14 times a day, seven days a week.

The service is the community's lifeline, according to its chief Roland Monague, because it's the only way to access the mainland.

"Our people have to cross day to day to get access to all the goods and services as well as hospitals, medical appointments," he said.

Beausoleil First Nation is not alone in its accessibility struggle -- the federal government is facing great pressure from a number of First Nations, many of them in remote locations, that are struggling to address crumbling infrastructure.

Optimism is growing, however, among First Nations communities across Canada -- along with a competing list of demands -- now that Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has vowed to reform Canada's relationship with Aboriginal Peoples.

The federal response on the Beausoleil ferry issue will help determine whether that commitment carries weight, Monague said.

"They promised to have a nation-to-nation relationship with First Nations," he said. "So tell me -- if this is not approved, what is our nation-to nation relationship?"

Federal funding for infrastructure in communities will facilitate economic development and increase access to health services and education, according to Ontario Assembly of First Nations Regional Chief Isadore Day.

Many reserves have inferior water systems, if they have water systems at all, and rely on winter roads because they do not have access to all-season roads, Day said. It's difficult to determine needs without a complete economic assessment, he added.

Beausoleil's 65-year-old vessel -- the M.V. Sandy Graham -- was purchased by the government in 1998 as an interim measure to transport passengers and vehicles.

It is no longer safe and a replacement is urgently needed, Monague said.

"They have a fiduciary responsibility to us as First Nations for health and safety," he said. "Without a proper, safe, viable transportation for the community, we are going to be in a predicament soon."

Peggy Smith, an associate professor at Lakehead University in Thunder Bay, Ont., said the new Liberal government will need to look at collaborating with communities instead of reaching conclusions from "on high."

"What's wrong with the way that we are making decisions about infrastructure in First Nations? ... It is about the decision-making model," she said, noting investments shouldn't always be looked at "as a sink."

Much of Canada is struggling with infrastructure, Smith added, but she said First Nations remain even further behind.

"We've got this failing infrastructure at all levels and how the government is going to figure out what is priority and what is not, I have no idea."

Beausoleil's ferry has been a long-standing issue -- it was slated for replacement when the federal Liberals were last in power, but the plan was dry-docked by the former Conservative government in 2007.

Replacing it is expected to cost \$30 million, said Monague, who made a personal pitch to Finance Minister Bill Morneau during meetings last month with the AFN. Morneau's office would not comment on the request.

"If the government can't commit, then we have to strategize and do this on our own," Monague said. "I, in good conscience, can't continue to sail this ferry knowing that tragedy could happen out on that water."

**Direct Link:** <http://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/ontario-first-nation-asks-federal-government-to-replace-aging-ferry-1.2776615>

## **Mandryk: Saskatchewan First Nations need to find own solutions in wake of La Loche tragedy**

MURRAY MANDRYK

**Published on: February 13, 2016 | Last Updated: February 13, 2016 10:32 AM CST**



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau lays flowers at a memorial at La Loche Community School on Jan. 29.

Dr. Richard Thatcher has spent a lifetime dealing with First Nations issues of the kind that most likely had at least something to do with last month's tragedy in La Loche.

And like many who acquire vast knowledge, the social and community health planning consultant's solutions can be as complex as the problems themselves. This is especially true in remote First Nations communities like La Loche that are isolated from economic opportunity and have seen despair fill the void that opportunity has vacated.

But while Thatcher loathes the simplistic, knee-jerk responses he has heard in the wake of the La Loche tragedy — from abandoning the community to throwing more money at the issue — he does think the start of the solution is rather simple:

First Nations community leaders need to establish a “values circle” where they, themselves, define their problems and needs and decide how to address them. “In these circles, they have to make choices,” Thatcher said in an interview. “They have to discuss and they have to decide themselves what they are willing to do ...

“Until they work through this they aren’t going to address the problems.”

If anything good is to come out of this tragedy, it may be finding ways to address the patterns and multiple factors that have led to “social pathologies in those communities,” he said.

By way of background, Thatcher has worked for various governments, universities and First Nations communities in his area of expertise. He is also author of the book *Fighting Firewater Fictions — Moving Beyond the Disease Model of Alcoholism in First Nations* in which he argues that alcoholism is wrongly attributed as a weakness and source of First Nations problems when really it’s one just of the many factors that led to an array of problems in such communities.

Low levels of education, unemployment, inter-generational social assistance dependency and long-term dependency on public housing produce disproportionate alcoholism, drug abuse, family violence, child neglect, child abuse, broken homes and high incarceration rates, Thatcher said.

“These are standard outcomes for impoverished concentrations of populations that have been separated from their traditional economic base, and displacement of traditional patterns of living, beliefs and social norms,” according to the sociologist. “This is true whether such circumstances adhere in La Loche or Buffalo Narrows, north Winnipeg or inner-city areas of Detroit, Baltimore or the Bantustans of South Africa.”

But the primary causes of such poverty and social upheaval is the isolation from market opportunities, he said. “These communities are essentially left stranded outside the modern marketplace and for the most part forgotten by the outside world.”

Due to a lack of economic opportunity and purpose, self-medication through alcohol and drugs becomes a predictable outcome for men in particular, Thatcher said. And this lack of identity then becomes expressed in violence both inside and outside the family — violence that often extends to family breakdown and high youth suicide rates, child abuse and homicide.

Thatcher said the only way to change the reality is for society to address the two elephants in the room: Local economies “that can’t keep up with growing aboriginal populations and social assistance dependency” and “the anti-social and suicidal behaviour patterns associated with binge drinking and other forms of substance abuse.”

What is now needed is a vehicle — a values circle — in which First Nations community leaders and elders identify the problems themselves and set out a path to solutions, he said. They need to lean on traditional values and economies but they should also be able to “cherry pick” the best from the modern economy. “Maybe they will have to look further than the little patch of land they are on.”

It may take a decade or longer to produce results.

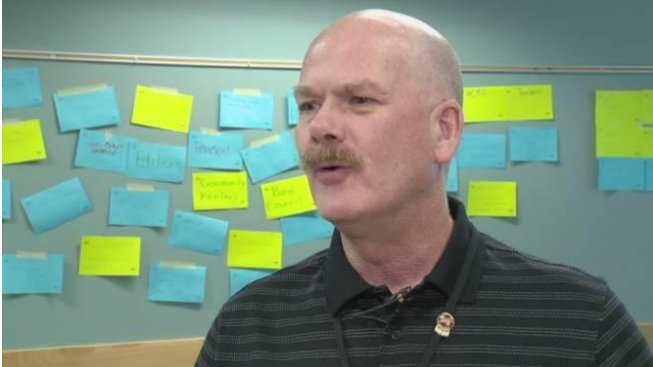
But if there is any good to come out of the La Loche tragedy, it will be First Nations communities taking a look at how they should solve their problems themselves.

*Mandryk is the political columnist for the Regina Leader-Post.*

**Direct Link:** <http://leaderpost.com/opinion/columnists/saskatchewan-first-nations-need-to-find-own-solutions-in-wake-of-la-loche-tragedy>

## **RCMP partner with Aboriginal youths for Leadership Workshop in Regina**

By Brandon Gonez Reporter Global News, February 13, 2016 5:32 pm



One of the attendees is 15 year-old Hunter Frank-Settee-Beardy, who admits that he's seen a lot in his hometown of Thompson, Manitoba.

REGINA – RCMP and at-risk youth from across Canada came to Regina for the RCMP Youth Leadership Workshop at the RCMP Depot.

One of the attendees is 15 year-old Hunter Frank-Settee-Beardy, who admits that he's seen a lot in his hometown of Thompson, Manitoba.

“What I see is that the youth start drinking at the age of 14,” Frank-Settee-Beardy said.

He's also well aware of the causes.

“Some of it is affected by the Indian residential school,” Frank-Settee-Beardy noted, while also acknowledging the strains that occur between aboriginal youth and police.

“The youth they have trust issues with the RCMP, well some do. So, it takes patience and time to make a bond with them.”

It's why Frank-Settee-Beardy came to Regina.

“I've known Hunter since he was a little baby”

He's one of sixteen aboriginal youth who represented each province and territory at the workshop.

Some of the activities included addressing some of the social issues that exist in their hometowns.

“So, Identifying a youth crime or victimization topic in their community. And over the course of this week building an action plan that they can go back to their community and implement,” RCMP youth engagement coordinator Vanessa Rotondo said.

Part of this pro-active policing approach meant pairing each young person with a police ally from their community.

“I’ve known Hunter since he was a little baby for a matter of fact,” Thompson RCMP Special Constable Robert Cleveland explained.

While Cleveland is no stranger to Frank-Settee-Beardy and his family, the workshop provided an atmosphere that allowed them to reveal all.

“We’re not wearing our uniforms this week, we’re just regular people,” Cleveland said.

“The youth they have trust issues with the RCMP”

He wasn’t afraid to show the bond the two had created over the course of the week but also highlighted the fact he learnt a lot about the issues facing communities nationwide.

“What kind of took my ear was the folks up in Nunavut. We may have drugs and alcohol but they have no food,” Cleveland noted.

At the end of the workshop all sixteen aboriginal youth and their police allies received a leadership certificate.

The hope is that such recognition will not only inspire them to be leaders in their forces and in their communities but to also continue the relationships they built in Regina.

**Direct Link:** <http://globalnews.ca/news/2516619/rcmp-partner-with-aboriginal-youths-for-leadership-workshop-in-regina/>

## **Great Whale's local store Whale-mart begins selling ptarmigan, beaver**

**Store stocks 'the best food for Cree people' for those who can't hunt**

By Mary Shem and Jaime Little, CBC News Posted: Feb 14, 2016 8:00 AM CT Last Updated: Feb 14, 2016 8:00 AM CT



The exterior of Whale-mart in Whapmagoostui, QC. (Submitted by James George)

The locally run general store in Whapmagoostui, Quebec's northern-most Cree community, has begun selling traditional foods such as ptarmigan and beaver to those who can't hunt and those who can't afford to.

When James George opened Whale-mart last year, he stocked the shelves with everything from laundry soap to winter coats. The store is owned by the band council in Whapmagoostui, also known as Great Whale River. Part of George's plan has always been to resell wild meat from local hunters.

"When we made the business plan, we thought of the residents especially elders who would want to eat traditional foods," George said.



Whale-mart started out selling everything from laundry soap to winter coats. Now it's adding country food to the mix. (Submitted by James George)

So far hunters have been selling George just a few ptarmigan at a time for resale at \$5.56 each. Whale-mart also sold beaver meat during the holidays and is hoping to offer caribou soon.

"We are looking for fresh ptarmigan, already cleaned," George said. "We do not buy old ptarmigan from people's freezers. We want them to be fresh because we want to ensure the quality of the bird."



## 'It's expensive to hunt'

Customers say they like being able to buy wild meat because they can't always get out to hunt themselves.

"It's expensive to hunt and trap," said George Diamond of Cree Public Health. He says the Cree tradition of sharing the harvest with extended family and community members is still strong, but with the increasing cost of snowmobiles, gas and equipment, many hunters appreciate being able to sell their surplus.

"We say it's the best food for Cree people," said Diamond. "It was given to us by our Creator."

George said the products sold out in no time.



Whale-mart's sunny logo. (Submitted by James George)

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/whalemart-begins-selling-ptarmigan-beaver-1.3446673>

## N.S. aboriginal band drafting plan to rebuild community destroyed in Halifax Explosion



The aftermath of the Halifax Explosion is shown in this 1917 file photo. (The Canadian Press)

---

The Canadian Press

Published Monday, February 15, 2016 4:33PM EST

HALIFAX -- A Nova Scotia aboriginal band is drafting ambitious plans to rebuild a community on the site of a Mi'kmaq village that was obliterated by the Halifax Explosion nearly a century ago.

Black-and-white photos taken at the turn of the last century show a collection of wigwams close to the shoreline at the narrowest part of Halifax harbour.

The Mi'kmaq called it Turtle Grove.

Some of the descendants of those who lived there, members of the Millbrook First Nation, want to develop the site to include a mix of residential and commercial properties.

The band, which is no stranger to commercial success, has tentative plans to build a boardwalk, marina, ferry terminal and residential units with office and retail space, some of which would be made available to band members.

About 900 members live on the existing reserve in the Truro area, an hour's drive north of Halifax. Another 900 live off the reserve, many of them in the Halifax area.

"That would be reserve land (and) that would create a desire (for band members) to be there," says chief Bob Gloade. "We're also looking at some cultural components and marking the history of the residents ... There could be a monument."

At least six families were living at Turtle Grove in December 1917 when a Belgian relief ship and a French vessel carrying munitions collided only a few hundred metres from the village, Gloade says.

The resulting blast and tidal wave razed Turtle Grove, killing many of its residents and almost 2,000 others in the surrounding area, making it the worst disaster in Canadian history.

To this day, a section of what was once Turtle Grove remains empty. The small tree-lined cove sits idle and overgrown in the shadow of a large, gas-fired generating station known as Tuft's Cove.

The humble site will soon be declared reserve land as part of an outstanding Mi'kmaq claim - though Gloade says there's a problem.

"The biggest hurdle that we're running into is firming up how much land we can develop so we can plan it out properly."

The 3.9-hectare site is stretched so thinly along the shoreline that it would be impossible to develop properly, he says.

The band wants to buy more land, but that could take a long time.

The site is adjacent to Shannon Park, a 33-hectare former military community built by the Department of National Defence after the Second World War. Abandoned by 2003, it includes more than 400 empty apartment units, a store, two schools, two churches, an arena, swimming pool and community centre.

In March 2014, the Canada Lands Company -- the federal government's real estate arm -- bought 33 hectares of Shannon Park for \$4 million.

The Crown corporation presented three development proposals to the public last November and a preferred concept is expected to be submitted for municipal approval this spring.

Demolition at the site started earlier this month. The Millbrook band is a partner with the contractor, Dexter Construction.

Gloade says talks with Canada Lands are moving slowly.

"There's been an interest and a willingness to work with us up until recently and there's kind of a delay and a lack of working relationship with them," he said.

Chris Millier, Canada Lands' director of real estate, said the federal agency has been working with the band since the project started.

"We consider them an extremely important stakeholder," he said in an interview. "Millbrook is a sovereign entity. Canada Lands would never suppose to tell them what they can and can't do with their property."

As for the band's desire to enlarge its footprint, Millier says the agency won't be in a position to talk about that until the Shannon Park project has received planning and design approvals.

"We don't envision lands being made available to the market much before 2018 or 2019," he said.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/n-s-aboriginal-band-drafting-plan-to-rebuild-community-destroyed-in-halifax-explosion-1.2778724>

# Ontario public servants to get mandatory sensitivity training on indigenous people, history

Ontario workers to be taught about the legacy of colonization in hopes to improve understanding.



Truth and Reconciliation Commission chairman Justice Murray Sinclair called the residential school system a dark period in Canadian history and an act of cultural genocide.

**By: Tanya Talaga** Global Economics Reporter, Published on Wed Feb 17 2016

More than 60,000 members of Ontario's public service will soon receive mandatory sensitivity training regarding the history and experiences of the province's indigenous people, the Star has learned.

Premier Kathleen Wynne is expected to announce on Wednesday that every OPS employee will receive mandatory indigenous cultural competency and anti-racism training. Ontario's public servants work in all government ministries from finance to child welfare, agencies and Crown corporations.

Wynne is also expected to further outline mandatory learning expectations in the province's public education curriculum to include the impact of residential schools, the history of colonization and the role of treaties signed between the Crown and First Nations.

The changes push Ontario toward addressing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) 94 recommendations, released last June, which are meant to incorporate indigenous culture and teaching throughout Canadian society.

For 100 years, residential schools — run by churches and sanctioned by the government — took nearly 150,000 First Nations, Métis and Inuit children away from their families and communities and sent them away to school. Thousands of children never made it home and died while at the schools.

TRC chair Justice Murray Sinclair called this dark period in Canadian history an act of cultural genocide as the impact of the mass removal of generations of children from their families left a legacy of broken families, poverty, mistrust of government, abuse, alcoholism and fractured lives.

A key component of the sensitivity training will be focused on violence against indigenous women and girls.

Exactly how many murdered and missing there are in Canada is the subject of ongoing debate. The RCMP released a report two years ago that said there were 1,181 murdered and missing indigenous women and girls between 1980 and 2012. However, some say that number is twice as high, closer to 4,000, as not every death was properly investigated.

Some families of murdered and missing women and girls have spoken of their displeasure with the investigations into their loved one's deaths and the problem of police racism.

Police racism came to the forefront last December when RCMP Commissioner Bob Paulson boldly admitted to a special meeting of Assembly of First Nations chiefs that there are "racists" in his police force and that he does not want them there. Also in December, Ontario Provincial Police Commissioner Vince Hawkes echoed Paulson by adding there is no room for racists on his force, either.

Since then, the RCMP has reached out to indigenous organizations to try to figure out how to go forward and mend a history of mutual mistrust.

The sensitivity training will instruct employees on terminology, colonial history in Ontario from treaties to child welfare and Indian hospitals such as the Fort William Indian Hospital Sanatorium, which operated from the 1940s to the 1970s. The training will discuss how social disparities and inequities grew from these experiences.

The training will include interactive cultural activities, the harm of stereotyping and the legacy of colonization. It will also teach better "communications and relationship-building skills to promote positive partnerships with indigenous people," according to information on the event obtained by the Star.

Other courses required for Ontario public servants to take include workplace violence prevention and training on Ontario Human Rights Code requirements regarding persons with disabilities.

The premier is also expected to discuss further progress on collaborating with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit partners on how they are incorporating indigenous history and culture into the public school curriculum.

Last August, the province and the Chiefs of Ontario signed a political accord that signaled a new relationship between the two. The accord affirmed, among other things, the inherent right to First Nations self-government and the importance of working together.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2016/02/17/ontario-public-servants-to-get-mandatory-sensitivity-training-on-indigenous-people-history.html>

## **Walkers going 1,000 kilometres**

Posted: Wednesday, February 17, 2016 6:00 am | *Updated: 6:04 am, Wed Feb 17, 2016.*  
**The Chronicle-Journal |**

A group of Webequie residents are raising awareness of a lack of health-care services on remote First Nations.

Webequie band member Norman Shewaybick, his sons Leon, Erick and Brandon and supporters are walking from Thunder Bay to their home community in memory of Shewaybick's wife Laura, who was flown from the remote First Nation last year in respiratory distress after the nursing station allegedly ran out of oxygen.

She passed away while hospitalized in Thunder Bay in October. They are honouring her memory by carrying an oxygen tank back to their community, a journey of approximately 1,000 kilometres.

"We'd like to thank all the supporters (of the Healing Journey Home 2016), the Ontario Provincial Police and the drivers on the road for giving us space to walk," said Shewaybick, during a rest stop Tuesday in Savant Lake, northwest of Thunder Bay.

"We've been talking to a lot of people who have been telling us their stories and saying 'thank you'. These stories keep us going. We don't want what happened to us to happen to anyone else."

Shewaybick, a high school teacher in Webequie, and his supporters, began the walk at the Thunder Bay District Health Unit on Friday. Travelling an average of 120 kilometres per day, they are expected to arrive home by the end of the month.

Nishnawbe Aski Nation Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler said the organization is "pleased to support Norman, his family and the Webequie community and our thoughts are with these walkers as they make their way back home.

"We were deeply touched by these tragic circumstances and we are proud to support their efforts to raise awareness of the need for health-care services in their community and other remote First Nations."

Shewaybick and his sons are encouraging members of the public to share their health-care experiences on their Facebook page called Healing Journey Home 2016.

"I read the stories people share and carry them with me while I walk. When I hear the animals in the distance, I give the stories to them," he said.

First Nation leaders and representatives of the government of Canada, including Ontario Regional Chief Isadore Day and Health Canada officials have been invited to meet with Webequie community leaders upon the walkers' arrival.

NAN called on the federal government to engage with First Nations and take action to improve health-care services last year following a scathing report by the auditor general of Canada concluding that First Nations in remote communities are severely marginalized when it comes to access and delivery.

The auditor general documented the continued failure by Health Canada to address the health care needs of First Nations communities, which has resulted in the health of the First Nations people being considerably poorer than that of the rest of the Canadian population, NAN says.

For more information and updates on the Healing Journey Home 2016, visit the Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/healingjourneyhome2016](http://www.facebook.com/healingjourneyhome2016).

Donations for the walk can be made through the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, c/o account: Healing Journey Home 2016, Branch 2087, account No. 7754590.



**Direct Link:** [http://www.chroniclejournal.com/news/local/walkers-going-kilometres/article\\_713e299e-d535-11e5-81eb-2b52aa866f0b.html](http://www.chroniclejournal.com/news/local/walkers-going-kilometres/article_713e299e-d535-11e5-81eb-2b52aa866f0b.html)

## Aboriginals and refugees

Posted: Thursday, February 18, 2016 11:20 am

### EDITORIAL |

HOW did the warm welcome for a Syrian refugee family to Thunder Bay get turned into a politicized diatribe about the circumstances of First Nation youth who come here for schooling? And will it help either cause?

Last week, following months of planning and fundraising, a local church took in a couple and their four children who had fled the unrelenting Syrian civil war. More such placements are in the works and it is a credit to Thunder Bay and Canada as a whole that people seeking a safe haven and a new life can find it here.

While the same is true of many remote First Nations youth who must move to Thunder Bay for secondary schooling, the story is not always pleasant. Unlike the Syrian family, some aboriginal youth do not receive a warm welcome here. For years it has been common for cruel, unthinking people to toss eggs and things at aboriginal people walking on city streets. Racist taunts are not uncommon, especially toward young people by cowards who would not have the nerve to assault older aboriginal people directly. Instead, vacuous generalizations are confined mainly to the anonymity of social media and hushed conversations over coffee and beer.

Whereas the Syrian family only just got here, the racism toward aboriginal people has grown over many years as their presence in the community has grown. While a small Facebook group opposes refugees in Thunder Bay, a much larger segment of people has misgivings about the growing First Nations population in Thunder Bay. This has led to a level of mistrust by some on both sides of a cultural divide that harms all of us.

The problem is based largely on assumptions borne of misunderstanding about treaty rights. It is magnified by criminal reports like this week's attack on a local boy by two aboriginal men who stabbed and shot him for want of a cigarette. Crime is perpetrated by all manner of people but the well of hatred that has sprung up around aboriginal people makes all of them somehow complicit in the eyes of the pernicious.

That does not mean aboriginal youth are less welcome here than refugees, as suggested in a CBC report this week and repeated in Parliament by MP Patty Hajdu. Nor should it mean, as immigrant youth worker Moffat Makuto told CBC, that while "we have the multicultural associations welcoming immigrants and refugees . . . I saw nothing welcoming aboriginal students."

There are scores of aboriginal organizations and services in Thunder Bay, beginning with Nishnawbe Aski Nation which represents 49 First Nations across Northern Ontario that are home to these students. NAN has two deputy grand chiefs responsible for education and the Decade For Youth Council with initiatives in youth mentoring, literacy and suicide prevention - a critical problem that is the subject of an inquest now under way.

Five NAN member communities operate in Thunder Bay as the Independent First Nations Alliance with an education advisory office that provides counselling to students. The Indian Youth Friendship Centre has been operating in Thunder Bay for decades. First Nation students have their own high school and soon will enjoy their own residence nearby.

Are the many aboriginal organizations locally doing all they can to ease the cultural transition of First Nations youth to the city? If not, why not?

The City of Thunder Bay has made this effort a mainstay with its Diversity, respect and anti-racism committee efforts that are a personal priority of the mayor's office. Local school boards have aboriginal student initiatives.

A wellspring of goodwill is growing in Thunder Bay to counter the negative backlash against aboriginal people by a minority with little understanding and less heart. That must be the focus, not a contrived difference in the welcome that is afforded people depending on where they come from.

**Direct Link:** [http://www.chroniclejournal.com/opinion/editorials/aboriginals-and-refugees/article\\_8f839336-d65b-11e5-96db-cfa250c794a2.html](http://www.chroniclejournal.com/opinion/editorials/aboriginals-and-refugees/article_8f839336-d65b-11e5-96db-cfa250c794a2.html)

## Aboriginal Crime, Justice & Law Enforcement

### Inuit women want police, justice officials to offer more protection

**"That's where all Inuit society should be standing — with our women and our girls"**

JIM BELL, February 12, 2016 - 7:00 am



Inuit women from across the Arctic and southern Canada have been meeting at the Sheraton Hotel on Albert St. in downtown Ottawa this week to find ways of ensuring Inuit participation in the federal government's upcoming national inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women. (PHOTO BY JIM BELL)

OTTAWA — In an effort to ensure recognition of Inuit-specific needs, Inuit women meeting in downtown Ottawa this week say the Liberal government's upcoming national inquiry on missing and murdered Indigenous women must focus on policing, the justice system, the protection of crime victims and the need across all of Inuit Nunangat for family violence services.

And for Pauktuutit, the national Inuit women's organization that's organizing the gathering, this still includes immediate adoption of an action plan to provide for violence prevention and healing in the four regions of Inuit Nunangat.

"That's always been our priority," Pauktuutit president Rebecca Kudloo said Feb. 11 at the start of the segment of that gathering that's open to outside observers.

Participants, including 30 women from across the Arctic brought to Ottawa for the event, along with Inuit women living in Ottawa and Pauktuutit board members, met privately Feb. 9 and Feb. 10 to share experiences — many of them horrific — and to talk about how to ensure Inuit participation at the upcoming MMIW inquiry.

They kept those sessions closed to protect the privacy of those who made intimate and painful disclosures.

But on Feb. 11, the organization, in a written summary of those discussions, listed their priorities and recommendations.

They include recommendations for the MMIW inquiry to look into how police and the justice system respond to Inuit.

This flows from complaints that police do not adequately investigate homicides and other crimes against Inuit women.

"Even though it's a murder, they say it's a suicide," a participant from Nunavik said.

A related recommendation is that the inquiry look into the lack of support for victims of violence in Inuit regions, and the hollow application of the "Victims Bill of Rights," or Bill C-32, which Stephen Harper's former Conservative government passed in 2015.

The Victims Bill of Rights codifies a long list of rights that crime victims are supposed to be able to exercise, such as the right to be informed of the progress of a criminal investigation, the right to know when an offender is released from prison and the right to protection from retaliation.

But many participants at the meeting said the new law not implemented in remote communities and many Inuit don't know about it.

Another recommendation is for the inquiry to look at the lack of community services like shelters, mental health facilities and counseling.

One woman from Nunavik said a women's shelter in her community was so badly underfunded, the staff went without pay cheques for three months.

The meeting's many recommendations include:

- a separate inquiry process for Inuit with Inuit-specific research, funding and structure;
- an Inuktitut name for the inquiry and the use of consistent Inuktitut terms for various concepts;
- at least one or two Inuit “commissioners,” including at least one Inuk lawyer;
- hearings in Inuit communities;
- the use of Inuit cultural practices and ceremonies;
- the availability of counselors before, during and after hearings;
- participation from affected families, Inuit organizations, governments and community services; and,
- equal representation from each region.

To take those messages to the federal government, Pauktuutit appears to have the support of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami.

“I do feel that we at ITK can work with Pauktuutit to make sure our voices are combined together,” Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami’s president, Natan Obed, said during the Feb. 11 session.

“That’s where all Inuit society should be standing — with our women and our girls,” he said.

Obed said he wants to see inquiry sessions “across Inuit Nunangat” and that by working together, Pauktuutit and ITK can “amplify the voice of Inuit.”

The minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Carolyn Bennett, with federal Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould, and Status of Women Minister Patty Hajdu have nearly completed pre-inquiry consultations with affected families across the country.

And their last consultation meeting is set for Feb. 15 in Ottawa.

Later in the month, a second national roundtable on the MMIW issue is to be held in Winnipeg, and is to be hosted by Manitoba Premier Greg Selinger.

That’s a gathering that will bring provincial and territorial governments together with national Aboriginal leaders.

The first such national roundtable, hosted by Ontario Premier Katherine Wynne, was held Feb. 27, 2015 in Ottawa.

Read Nunatsiaqonline.ca later for more coverage of the Pauktuutit pre-inquiry meeting.

**Direct Link:**

[http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674inuit\\_women\\_want\\_more\\_protection\\_better\\_service\\_from\\_police\\_justice\\_of/](http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674inuit_women_want_more_protection_better_service_from_police_justice_of/)

## **First Nations student deaths inquest adjourns until Feb. 22**

### **Several jurors became ill this week, delaying proceedings**

By Jody Porter, CBC News Posted: Feb 12, 2016 6:30 AM ET Last Updated: Feb 12, 2016 6:30 AM ET



The courthouse in Thunder Bay, Ont. where the First Nations student deaths inquest is being held. (CBC)

The testimony of several witnesses is being delayed at the First Nations student deaths inquest in Thunder Bay, Ont., after three of the five jurors reported feeling unwell this week.

Proceedings were halted early on Monday, then again on Wednesday and finally cancelled altogether on Thursday when different jurors reported they were sick, according to the coroner's counsel. The inquest is scheduled to resume on Feb. 22.

It is examining the deaths of seven students from remote First Nations who died while attending high school in Thunder Bay. One student died from an unknown medical condition, another was found dead on the floor of her boarding home.

The bodies of five students — all teenaged boys — were found in rivers that flow through the city. Their deaths remain unexplained.

Since the inquest began in October, jurors have heard details about each of the seven individual deaths. This month testimony moved on to explore the social context of their lives.

So far they've heard from a treaty expert, an academic who specializes in intergenerational trauma, school officials and **a nurse at the First Nations high school, who says students suffer from PTSD.**

The delays mean that testimony from a student support services coordinator, a child welfare agency, a youth program director and current students, and others, will need to be cancelled or rescheduled.

Coroner's counsel says meetings are underway to determine how to recoup the lost time.

The final two weeks of testimony are already tightly scheduled. Witnesses include government officials who are expected to explain the funding discrepancies between provincially and federally funded schools.

Children's rights advocate Cindy Blackstock is scheduled to testify in March. **She recently won her case before the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal.** It ruled that the federal government discriminates against First Nations children on reserves in the provision of child welfare services.

In April, the jury at the inquest is expected to deliver recommendations for keeping First Nations students safe in Thunder Bay.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/first-nations-student-deaths-inquest-adjourns-until-feb-22-1.3443829>

## **Inquest report slams policing failures on Manitoba First Nation**

**'Others unlawfully detained and kept in such conditions could die as well if action is not taken'**

By Darren Bernhardt, [CBC News](#) Posted: Feb 12, 2016 1:06 PM CT Last Updated: Feb 12, 2016 1:38 PM CT



Better training of security officers, improved conditions of detention cells and higher quality video surveillance of the cells, are cited in an inquest report into the 2011 death of Brian McPherson.



An inquest report into the death of a man in a northern Manitoba First Nation holding cell provides a damning list of failures and "very concerning" practices that need to be changed.

Brian McPherson, 44, died in the early morning hours of Aug. 27, 2011, while in custody at the Garden Hill band constable holding cells. Though his cause of death was found to be sudden heart failure, an inquest is mandatory when anyone dies in custody to determine what can be done to prevent similar deaths in the future.

According to the inquest report, released this week, the holding cell was in poor condition, far too small and overcrowded.

The cell's door was secured by a 2x4 board and the viewing port was covered by tape, paper and cardboard, preventing the guards from looking in to check on prisoners. The only method to check prisoners was to open the cell door but guards are not permitted to do so unless there is an emergency.

The only other way to check on the prisoners was through security monitors, which had low resolution black-and-white monitors that provided dull and blurry images and had no audio.

Along with McPherson, seven others were crowded into a room measuring 3.32 metres by 2.67 metres, a room with hard walls and floors and no bedding.

On the evening of Aug. 26, 2011, McPherson and some friends were arrested at his home for drinking home-brew booze, known as superjuice. Garden Hill, an isolated community on the shore of Island Lake, about 500 kilometres northeast of Winnipeg, has a prohibition on alcohol.

At 8 a.m. the next morning, another prisoner advised guards that McPherson was non-responsive. Attempts were made, unsuccessfully, to revive him.

"It was clear he had been dead for some time with rigor mortis evident in Mr. McPherson's limbs," the inquest report states, noting CPR could not be administered because McPherson's jaw couldn't be opened.

## **Lack of training**

The inquest heard testimony from a number of "securities" — volunteers who assist band constables in policing the First Nation. Every one of them spoke of having no training in law enforcement.

The inquest also heard band constables never obtain warrants from judges or justices and use photocopied letters of authority from the band council to enter people's homes.

Many of them said they would not have arrested anyone at McPherson's home that night if they had not been ordered to do so by band Coun. Wayne Harper, a cousin to McPherson.

The people at McPherson's home were described as polite and co-operative — no one was causing any trouble or was so drunk as to not be able to care for themselves, the inquest heard.

That testimony was echoed by band constable Shannon Beardy, who, despite being the officer on duty, had never received training in law enforcement. She once had "on the job" training in self defence and only received first aid training a year after McPherson's death, she said.

## **Councillor's influence cited**

Like the volunteers who assisted her, Beardy said she would not have arrested anyone at McPherson house but Harper was insistent.

He splashed the superjuice into the face of each person at the party before ordering Beardy to take them into custody, according to the inquest report.

Harper, who was in charge of the justice portfolios as councillor, agreed the people at the party were polite and co-operative but said he poured the superjuice on them out of anger, chiding them for drinking it and warning it would kill them, according to the inquest report.

Harper maintained it was his view that the prohibition bylaw requires the arrest of anyone who has drank alcohol, regardless of the level of intoxication.

In the end, the inquest concluded "there is little doubt" McPherson would have died, regardless if he was arrested or not. However, there is clear evidence he was not lawfully arrested and should not have been detained "and certainly not detained in cells that were overcrowded and in an unacceptable condition," the report states.

"It is foreseeable that others unlawfully detained and kept in such conditions could die as well if action is not taken."

The inquest report urges First Nation safety officers or band peace officers be properly trained and free from the direction of "untrained individuals" such as band councillors.

The report, which noted no evidence of the presence of a defibrillators in the building housing the detention cells, calls for the proper construction and maintenance of holding facilities, "along with a system of periodic inspections to ensure facilities are maintained to a proper standard of safety and hygiene."

## Who's responsible?

The problem, the report states, is that no one seems willing to take responsibility.

"The evidence in this inquest has revealed that a stumbling block for the implementation of past inquest recommendations respecting the condition of band-run cells is that no senior level of government has taken responsibility for the maintenance, upkeep and supervision of detention cells on band land.

"The province has taken the position that such cells were part of the band constable program and hence outside the jurisdiction of the province. Canada takes the position that it provided funds to the band constable program and had no supervisory duty."

The report notes that in 2013 a solution seemed to be in place but it "unraveled" for unknown reasons. An arrangement had been made for an RCMP trailer, with up-to-standard cells, to be moved onto the reserve.

"The court is concerned that part of the reason may be the First Nation's unwillingness to discontinue the practice of untrained and unauthorized band constables detaining people for band bylaw violations," the report states. "It must be clearly stated these are unlawful detentions and should stop."

The inquest judge also took exception to witness testimony that people detained in the holding cells have had \$75-\$100 taken off their welfare cheques.

"The deduction of monies from detained person's welfare cheques without due process is very concerning," the report states.

Until RCMP cells are put in place and the RCMP accepts responsibility for maintaining and operating those cells, the province must step up to inspect the current holding cells "as part of its jurisdiction to administer justice within its borders," the report states.

"The fact that such substandard detention cells exist and are being used cannot be ignored."

The inquest judge also called on improvements to:

- **Video surveillance**

It is common in this day and age to walk into any commercial establishment and see oneself in dazzling colour on a high definition security camera television screen. It is hard to understand why this type of widely available technology is not being employed in detention facilities. All witnesses who were guarding the prisoners on the date of Mr. McPherson's death spoke of the difficulty they had observing the prisoners with such poor resolution video feeds. A number of them agreed they may have seen the blood from Mr. McPherson's nose and mouth if they

had a proper high resolution colour video feed. The addition of audio feeds would further assist guards to determine if there are sounds, (i.e. snoring or breathing), coming from individual detainees.

- **Record keeping**

The record keeping at this detention facility left much to be desired. The log book had very minimal information concerning each detainee. Essentially it was limited to the person's name, the names of the band constables and securities that lodged him, when he was lodged, and when he was released. Marginal notes were made about how long the individual was to be held or whether they were to be released to a particular person. Very occasionally a note of personal items taken from the detainee would be recorded. Although each witness maintained they took notes of checks done on the prisoners every 15 minutes, no such records were ever produced and certainly no such notations were kept on the log book. At best the system was a hodgepodge not in keeping with any professional standard.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/inquest-death-report-garden-hill-brian-mcpherson-1.3445601>

## **RCMP working to rebuild relationship with indigenous peoples**

The RCMP has been quietly meeting with national aboriginal organizations to start building a better relationship with indigenous peoples.



"It's important to sit down and say, 'Enough pointing fingers. What are we going to do to make this better? What are we going to do to improve this relationship?' Because quite frankly, indigenous people aren't going away and neither is the RCMP," Dawn Lavell-Harvard, president of the Native Women's Association of Canada.

**By: Joanna Smith** Ottawa Bureau reporter, Published on Fri Feb 12 2016

OTTAWA—The RCMP has been quietly meeting with national aboriginal organizations to start building a better relationship with indigenous peoples following a long history of mutual distrust.

“I think we have seen that, historically, the relationship with policing in Canada for aboriginal peoples has been tenuous at best,” said Dawn Lavell Harvard, president of the Native Women’s Association of Canada (NWAC).

“It’s important to sit down and say, ‘Enough pointing fingers. What are we going to do to make this better? What are we going to do to improve this relationship?’ Because quite frankly, indigenous people aren’t going away and neither is the RCMP. We need to find a way to make this relationship work in a positive way,” she said.

A watershed moment came late last year when RCMP Commissioner Bob Paulson responded to a question from the floor of an Assembly of First Nations (AFN) gathering in Gatineau, Que., about racism under his watch.

“I hear what you say. I understand there are racists in my police force. I don’t want them to be in my police force,” Paulson said Dec. 9.

The Star has learned that AFN National Chief Perry Bellegarde, who told the top Mountie that day his presence at the meeting was “starting to earn that trust and respect,” has since followed up with a one-on-one meeting with Paulson to discuss the way forward.

“The discussion focused on the need for concrete action to end racism within the police force,” the AFN said of the Jan. 15 meeting in an emailed statement, as Bellegarde was unavailable for an interview Thursday.

The AFN said the meeting touched on specific recommendations, such as: cultural competency training for officers; better operations, including improved investigations and communication, when it comes to cases involving First Nations people and their families; and protocols for community engagement.

Another recommendation was for “accurate and reliable” data collection systems and databases, an area highlighted by a recent Star investigation into missing and murdered indigenous women, which raised questions about the solve rates of homicides and relationships between perpetrators and victims.

The efforts did not begin and end with that one-on-one meeting.

The Star has also learned the Mounties formed a working group devoted to empowering indigenous women and preventing violence that includes representatives from six aboriginal organizations, which will meet for the second time Feb. 17 at RCMP national headquarters in Ottawa.

RCMP spokesman Sgt. Harold Pfleiderer said the meeting is part of long-lasting and ongoing “solid relationship” with the national aboriginal organizations, which the Mounties meet with quarterly.

“These meetings focus on ways the RCMP can partner with the (national aboriginal organizations) in the areas of crime prevention and reducing the victimization of indigenous peoples,” Pfeleiderer wrote in a statement.

“It’s about working together and coming up with some change through a positive working relationship,” said Chief Dwight Dorey of the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, which represents non-status Indians and others living off-reserve.

Lavell Harvard said Paulson took a “courageous first step” by acknowledging racism was part of the problem and sees the meetings — both the working group and other informal conversations — as a way to start tackling the monumental challenge of missing and murdered indigenous women now, rather than after the promised national inquiry makes its recommendations.

She also said she has already seen some changes, in that when families of missing or murdered indigenous women call her organization seeking help in dealing with the RCMP, she can pass along the concerns to an actual name and number.

“In the past we wouldn’t have even known who to call. The fact that we have started having some conversations and having that partnership gives us somebody that we can call, somebody that we can pass that along to and say, ‘How can we help here?’ Rather than us just saying there is nothing we can do, because all that does is make the situation worse,” she said.

Lavell Harvard said she would like to see the RCMP replicate a toolkit NWAC hands out to families of missing and murdered indigenous women — featuring tips on how to navigate the process, including how to file a missing persons report, ask questions, take notes, spread the word and advocate — so detectives can provide it to them directly.

“We need our families to be able to feel that they can go to the police for support when they need to,” she said.

Clément Chartier, president of the Métis National Council, also agreed the relationship needs work, but shared his personal feeling of disillusionment following an earlier meeting with the RCMP on missing and murdered indigenous women.

In 1961, Chartier was 15 years old and at residential school in The Pas, Man., when his mother, Rosa Chartier, was beaten to death in his hometown of Buffalo Narrows, Sask.

He said two people were later acquitted and he has always felt a sense of injustice about a crime he believes would have been handled differently if his mother had been a white woman.

Chartier said he “warmed up to the RCMP” at the meeting and followed up, saying he would be interested in pursuing what happened to his mother, but after being referred to a couple of different people all he was told was to get the transcripts from the trial and read them for himself.



“It kind of personally soured me a bit in terms of this whole process,” said Chartier, whose schedule will not allow him to attend the Feb. 17 meeting and he did not feel inclined to change it.

“I didn’t have a burning desire to make myself available to sit there and listen to them,” said Chartier, who plans to attend the families gathering ahead of the second national roundtable on missing and murdered indigenous women in Winnipeg at the end of the month.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2016/02/12/rcmp-working-to-rebuild-relationship-with-indigenous-peoples.html>

## **Manitoba inquest exposes repeated failures to fix substandard policing in Indigenous communities**

National News | February 13, 2016 by APTN National News



**Cara McKenna**

**APTN National News**

The inquest into the death of a northern Manitoba First Nations man who suffered heart failure while he was crammed in a tiny holding cell has exposed repeated failures to fix substandard policing in Indigenous communities.

Brian McPherson, 44, a diabetic, died during a series of incidents involving untrained or insufficiently trained police officers and an inadequate jail in the Garden Hill First Nation, Man., in 2011.

An inquiry into his death began in October 2013 in Garden Hill and ended last June in Winnipeg.

The inquest report, released Friday, condemns the provincial and federal governments for continually failing to adequately fund and standardize First Nations policing despite a number of other previous inquest reports and studies suggesting changes.

Manitoba Provincial Court Judge Malcolm McDonald has made 12 recommendations that mostly focus around fixing inadequate funding to First Nations police services and establishing proper facilities, training and safety measures.

The inquest heard that Garden Hill was operating an unauthorized jail and Ottawa had cut funding for its band constable program shortly before McPherson's death because the community failed to provide a proper financial audit.

In 2006, Garden Hill had also applied to a federal-provincial First Nations police force program that was the remote community's only viable option. It was denied.

On the night of his death in late August, McPherson and a number of other people were gathered at a home in Garden Hill, which is designated as a dry community.

The inquest heard band Coun. Wayne Harper ordered Garden Hill's Const. Shannon Beardy and three untrained volunteer assistants to go inside and arrest anyone who had "superjuice" – a potent home brew that is common in remote communities.

Beardy and one of the volunteer police assistants, Douglas Flett, testified that they did not think anyone was causing problems and would not have detained anyone if not for the order.

Beardy also told the inquest that she was given no training prior to starting as constable in 2011, and that she quit her job the next year because she was always angry.

That night, as many as 30 people were held at Garden Hill's public safety building, with McPherson and at least seven others packed into a tiny cell.

The inquest heard that the cell block was run down, had no bedding and was only about nine square metres in size. Cardboard and duct tape covered the windows so no one could see inside.

Three guards on duty had as little as 20 minutes of training before handling prisoners and could only see inside the cells through low-res black and white video monitors that didn't transmit sound.

McPherson was found dead the next morning by another prisoner, though the inquest report acknowledges that he likely would have died that night regardless of where he was.

He left behind two children and his partner Ann Monias, who described McPherson as a gentle character who had ongoing health problems.

**Direct Link:** <http://aptn.ca/news/2016/02/13/manitoba-inquest-exposes-repeated-failures-to-fix-substandard-policing-in-indigenous-communities/>

## Secwepemc 'women warriors' stop treaty vote, force RCMP to release detained man

National News | February 13, 2016 by Jorge Barrera |

**Jorge Barrera**

**APTN National News**

The RCMP was forced to release a detained man during a demonstration against a treaty vote Thursday on a First Nation reserve in British Columbia's interior after a police truck was surrounded by Secwepemc "women warriors" demanding the man's release, according to a spokesperson for the group.

The group of about a dozen women, children and men disrupted a vote on the Williams Lake Indian Band reserve Thursday to ratify an agreement-in-principle of a proposed modern-day treaty.

A ballot box was smashed and ballots were burned during the demonstration, forcing a cancellation of the vote.



A banner is unfurled during an anti-treaty vote protest on the Williams Lake Indian Band reserve Thursday. Facebook photo

The Williams Lake Indian Band vote will now be held on March 15, according to a statement released by the Northern Secwepemc te Qelmucw (NStQ) tribal council which represents four Secwepemc First Nations.

The NStQ First Nations are negotiating a modern-day treaty through the B.C. Treaty Process and held votes on ratifying an agreement-in-principle in all four member First Nations on Thursday. Only the Williams Lake Indian Band vote was disrupted.

The “yes” side in favour of the agreement triumphed in the other three Secwepemc First Nations of Canim Lake Indian Band, also known as Tsq’escen’, Soda Creek Indian Band, also known as Xats’üll, and the Canoe Creek-Dog Creek Band, also known as Stswecem’c-Xgat’tem.

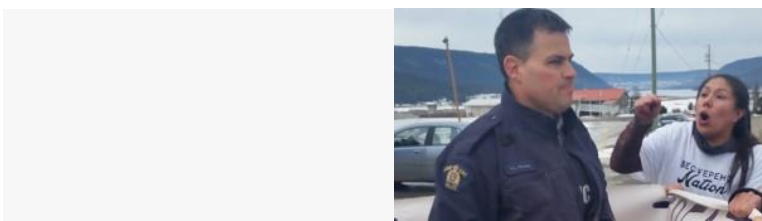
The four member NStQ First Nations have a total population of about 2,000 people and combined claimed traditional territory of about 5.6 million hectares.

The six-stage B.C. treaty process involves negotiations between First Nations, B.C. and Ottawa.

Kanahus Manuel, a spokesperson for the Secwepemc women warriors, said the NStQ’s proposed modern-day treaty will lead to the termination of Secwepemc title over a large swath of land in exchange for a small percentage of territory and cash.

Manuel said the whole Secwepemc nation, which includes a total of 17 First Nations, has never surrendered title to its territory, which she said is about the size of Florida.

“People across the nation are completely opposed to the treaty,” said Manuel. “What it will do is modify our collective rights we hold in our territory where we are able to walk freely...It is an extinguishment process where you extinguish your rights to the Crown and you are granted back modified treaty rights and fee simple land.”



Kanahus Manuel confronts an RCMP officer during an anti-treaty vote demonstration Thursday on the Williams Lake Indian Band reserve in British Columbia’s interior. Facebook photo.

Video of the demonstration posted on Facebook showed an RMCP officer arresting a man while people shouted “no treaty” and “the RCMP has no jurisdiction” while a drum thumped in the background. The man, later identified as Williams Lake Indian Band member Darcy Kobelt, was then put into an RCMP pick-up truck which was surrounded by women chanting, “No treaty, let him go.”

The women stood directly behind the RCMP truck with a banner reading “No NSTQ Treaty, No Secwepemc Consent.”

The RCMP officer, clearly flustered by the demonstration, is then shown standing on a small patch of snow waiting for backup.

Photos posted to Facebook show that at least two RCMP cruisers and an SUV showed up to try and take control of the situation.

Manuel said Kobelt was let go after he signed—inside the police truck—a promise to appear in court on a charge of mischief in relation to the smashed ballot box.

“The women had surrounded the police truck and demanded that they released him and they did right on site,” said Manuel. “Our women are always sent to the front-lines. We say, ‘The strong hearts to the front,’ and it’s always the women, the women with the children. Women came out with their families because that is what we are defending, we are defending our children’s future.”

The Williams Lake RCMP did not respond to repeated requests for comment.



RCMP vehicles on the scene during anti-treaty vote demonstration on the Williams Lake Indian Band reserve on Thursday. Facebook photo

Chief Ann Louie, of the Williams Lake Indian Band, also known as T'exelc, did not respond to a request for comment.

Stswecem'c-Xgat'tem First Nation Chief Patrick Harry, whose community voted 113 to 72 in favour of the proposed treaty agreement-in-principle, said he did not respect the demonstrators because they tried to interfere with an internal T'exelc matter.

“Those types of actions they don’t reflect on what the Secwepemc nation, what its culture is all about. We like to deal with things in a more respectful manner than that. We don’t respect the fact there were kids put on the front-lines of that and elders were disrespected and people assaulted and in some cases lives were threatened,” said Harry. “We are operating through a democratic process....Everybody was given a choice to vote, we are not forcing anything on anyone.”

Harry said he disagreed with the claim his community, as part of the NSTQ process, is negotiating to extinguish its rights.

“We don’t see it as giving up anything. We see it as gaining. Also, I think that as First Nations, there are different routes and different paths to reconciliation and they are all challenging,” he said. “The treaty process is one path to reconciliation that our community has given us a mandate to follow through with.”

Harry said he would have liked the results to have shown more support for the yes side, but now, as talks head to a final agreement, the NSTQ negotiators will be pushing for a better deal.

Currently, the treaty would give the NSTQ about 24,500 hectares of land and over \$45 million.

“We look forward to the offer being increased, we look forward to some of the recent case law being implemented into our process,” said Harry. “We look to the government to recognize the Tsilhqot’in (Supreme Court) decision and implement it into our process and increase the offer.”

The yes side at Tsq’escen’ won by a 125 to 84 vote margin. In Xats’üll the yes side won 90 votes to 48.

On the same day as the vote, Yale First Nation, which sits along the Fraser River, announced it was pulling out of the B.C. treaty process.

**Direct Link:** <http://aptn.ca/news/2016/02/13/secwepemc-women-warriors-stop-treaty-vote-force-rcmp-to-release-detained-man/>

## **Police officer, 2nd man killed in shooting in Lac-Simon, Que.**

**Thierry Leroux, 26, named as officer shot Saturday while responding to domestic call**

CBC News Posted: Feb 14, 2016 9:27 AM ET Last Updated: Feb 15, 2016 7:19 AM ET



Thierry Leroux, 26, has been identified as the police officer shot dead Saturday in Lac-Simon. (Facebook)



## UPDATED

- Dead police officer identified as Thierry Leroux, 26, of Amos, Que.
- 2nd shooting victim is Joseph Anthony Raymond-Papatie, 22
- Raymond-Papatie believed to have died of self-inflicted wound

Quebec provincial police have identified the officer shot dead Saturday in Lac-Simon as Thierry Leroux, 26, of Amos.

He had been a member of the Lac-Simon aboriginal police force for only six months.

Joseph Anthony Raymond-Papatie, 22, was found dead, apparently of a self-inflicted wound, shortly after Leroux was shot.



Crime-scene tape surrounds the home in Lac-Simon, Que., where a police officer, Thierry Leroux, 26, was shot dead Saturday. The shooting suspect was found dead inside the home, apparently from a self-inflicted wound. (Claude Bouchard/Radio-Canada)

The deaths have left the small Algonquin community 500 km northwest of Montreal in a state of shock.

According to the Sûreté du Québec (SQ), two members of the Lac-Simon aboriginal police force were called to respond to a domestic disturbance about 10:30 p.m. Saturday.

As they approached the home, a shot was fired from inside, striking Leroux. He was taken to hospital in Val-d'Or, where he died.

Raymond-Papatie was found dead inside the home from what is believed to be a self-inflicted gunshot, said Benoît Coutu, a spokesperson for the Sûreté du Québec.



Members of the Algonquin community march through the streets on Sunday. (Claude Bouchard/Radio-Canada)

Members of the community marched Sunday afternoon to the house and the police station.

The march started with speeches at Lac-Simon's community centre.



Resident Rex McKenzie prepares roses to pay respects to the families of the two men who died Saturday night. (Claude Bouchard/Radio-Canada)

People placed roses in front of the Lac-Simon aboriginal police force's station to commemorate Leroux's death.

## **Police did not return fire**

Coutu said the responding police officers did not return fire after they were shot at.

Police have opened an investigation into the shooting. Under Quebec law, any incident involving a police officer in which a firearm is discharged must be investigated by a different police force.



Lac-Simon is located near Val-d'Or, about 500 kilometres from Montreal in the province's Abitibi region.

Lac-Simon band officials have put a crisis team in place to deal with the aftermath of the shooting. The band council met this afternoon.

The SQ is also providing support to the community and police officers, said Coutu.

Police officers across Canada have taken to social media to express their condolences to the Lac-Simon police force and to the officer's family.

Quebec Premier Philippe Couillard also tweeted his condolences, adding that provincial Aboriginal Affairs Minister Geoffrey Kelley was in contact with the community.

Leroux is originally from Amos, about 100 kilometres northwest of Lac-Simon.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/lac-simon-shooting-1.3447853>

## **RCMP needs to get beyond talk in healing relationship with natives: Editorial**

RCMP Commissioner Bob Paulson is quietly meeting with aboriginal leaders to build a better relationship with indigenous peoples and rid the force of racists.



Since acknowledging there is racism within his ranks, RCMP Commissioner Bob Paulson has been quietly building relationships with aboriginal groups.

Published on Sat Feb 13 2016

When RCMP Commissioner Bob Paulson acknowledged at a meeting of the Assembly of First Nations last December that there are racists in his force that he would love to be rid of, he was commended by aboriginal leaders for acknowledging the problem so forthrightly.

Now we find out, through [a report by the Star's Joanna Smith](#), that the RCMP and national aboriginal groups have followed up on that meeting with a series of encounters aimed at finally building a “solid relationship” after so many years of mutual distrust.

It sounds like all this has the makings of a real breakthrough. So here's a sobering reminder that we've been there before, a long time ago, and not much came of it. Way back in March 1989, the Star reported that more than 300 police and minority delegates literally joined hands and danced to the pounding beat of an aboriginal drum to celebrate what they thought *then* was an end to racism in the RCMP.

At that time, then-RCMP commissioner Norman Inkster promised to review 30 solid reform proposals with an eye toward the eventual implementation of all of them. That included destroying pamphlets that described Mounties as rescuing “Indians debauched and demoralized by whiskey.” Said Inkster, “We want things to move.”

Fast forward almost 27 years, and yet another commissioner and set of native leaders are meeting and agreeing that things must change, and quickly.

To his credit, Paulson is certainly trying. Since acknowledging there is racism in his ranks the commissioner has held a one-on-one meeting with the Assembly of First Nations “on the need for concrete action to end racism within the police force.”

And he is building relationships with other aboriginal groups. He has been quietly meeting with a working group of national organizations devoted to empowering indigenous women and preventing violence. And he holds quarterly meetings with native groups to talk about crime prevention and reducing the victimization of indigenous peoples.

But it will take a lot more than goodwill and meetings, as Inkster's long-ago experience underlines so well, to eliminate racism within the ranks of the national police force.

One thing Paulson should act on immediately, as the Star has argued before, is ensuring there is a curriculum and sensitivity training in place at the RCMP academy that is strong enough to counter ignorance among cadets about First Nations culture.

It's always good to talk. But the time for action is now.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.thestar.com/opinion/editorials/2016/02/13/rcmp-needs-to-get-beyond-talk-in-healing-relationship-with-natives-editorial.html>

## **After 30 years, no justice for Iqaluit's Mary Ann Birmingham**

## Fifteen-year-old murder victim's family still hopes perpetrator can be identified

JIM BELL, February 15, 2016 - 8:30 am



After 30 years, a daughter and her mother still long for justice. Barbara Sevigny (left) sister of the late Mary Ann Birmingham of Iqaluit, with her mother, Sarah Birmingham, hold a photo of Mary Ann and Martha's little son, the late Lyta Birmingham, made prior to 15-year-old Mary Ann's brutal murder on May 26, 1986 in Iqaluit. The death, still unsolved, occurred when Sarah had taken Lyta to Montreal to be treated for leukemia. Sevigny said she hopes publishing the photo may trigger someone's memory and lead to evidence that could see the perpetrator brought to justice. This photo was taken Feb. 12, at the end of an emotionally draining consultation meeting that Pauktuutit held over four days in Ottawa last week. At the end of the gathering, members of Inuit families whose girls and women were taken in crimes of violence lit a display of candles in memory of their lost loved ones. (PHOTO BY JIM BELL)

OTTAWA — One dark week nearly 30 years ago, an icy fear kept the people of Iqaluit locked in its grip, followed by an inconsolable grief that has never quite lifted.

On May 26, 1986, Mary Ann Birmingham, 15, died at the hands of an unknown assailant who stabbed and mutilated her inside her family's housing unit near the beach.

She's one of the nearly 1,200 missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls whose deaths and unexplained disappearances have provoked a Canada-wide demand for the national MMIW inquiry that the federal government is now preparing for.

It was Mary Ann's sister, Barbara Sevigny, now a counsellor with Tungasuvvingat Inuit organization in Ottawa, who found the young teenager at home some days after her death.

Sevigny had flown back that day from Montreal, where her mother, Sarah Birmingham, had taken her little brother, the late Lyta Birmingham, to be treated for leukemia.

"I know now that I was in shock. But the RCMP officer I talked to at the station was very good at helping me out of it and getting me to talk," said Barbara Sevigny, who later became a trauma and grief counselor.

Police, however, were not able to solve the crime. Through the spring and summer of 1986, many Iqaluit residents were kept awake every night by the disturbing knowledge that a brutal killer was likely still at large.

The late Fred Coman and the late Lionel Jones, along with other benefactors, put a up a \$10,000 reward for information that could solve Mary Ann's murder.

For many months, *Nunatsiaq News* donated space every week to advertise the reward — but police could not find enough evidence to identify the killer and lay a charge.

In the fall of 1986, an Iqaluit man named Jopie Atsiqtaq murdered Pootoogoo Eyesiak, 21, and his mother, Oolayou Eyesiak, 51, using a kitchen knife.

Police arrested and charged him the next morning. Because the apparent facts were so similar, many Iqaluit residents believed Atsiqtaq was responsible also for the death of Mary Ann Birmingham.

For that reason, Justice David Marshall of the Supreme Court of the Northwest Territories decided that, to give Atsiqtaq a fair trial, a 12-person jury be chosen in Rankin Inlet and flown to Iqaluit.

In early 1988, that jury found Atsiqtaq guilty on two counts of second degree murder.

Marshall sentenced him to life in prison, with no eligibility for parole for 10 years. Atsiqtaq has never received parole and still serves out his sentence at a federal penitentiary.

In a letter to *Nunatsiaq News* that was never published, but shared with the court and admitted as evidence at trial, Atsiqtaq apologized for killing the mother and son but emphatically denied any responsibility for Mary Ann's death.

Police later charged him with that crime, but after a preliminary inquiry, a territorial court judge found insufficient evidence to send him to trial.

And so the mystery persists. But Barbara Sevigny and other family members, such as Iqaluit's former mayor, Elisapee Sheutiapik, who has spoken about her sister's murder many times, still hope the perpetrator will be brought to justice.

"We're hoping if you print the picture of us, it might trigger somebody's memory," she told *Nunatsiaq News* this past Friday.

Meanwhile, Sevigny put her counselling skills to good use last week at a MMIW inquiry consultation organized in Ottawa by Pauktuutit, the national Inuit women's association.

She spent much of her time offering advice and comfort to other members of Inuit families whose daughters, sisters, mothers and cousins have been taken from them by crimes of violence.

That meeting produced numerous recommendations aimed at ensuring the national inquiry acknowledges the specific needs of Inuit, as well as a proposed strategic plan for Inuit violence prevention and healing.

On Feb. 15, Carolyn Bennett, the Indigenous and northern affairs minister, will host the last of her series of consultation meetings on the design of her government's upcoming MMIW inquiry, at the Marriott hotel in downtown Ottawa.

And at the end of February, the Government of Manitoba will host the second national roundtable on the issue in an event that will bring provincial and territorial officials together with leaders of Canada's national Indigenous organizations.

"We are not alone as survivors," Seigny said.

**Direct Link:**

[http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674after\\_30\\_years\\_igaluit\\_girls\\_murder\\_still\\_unsolved/](http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674after_30_years_igaluit_girls_murder_still_unsolved/)

## **'Active' shooter in Sagamok — reports**

By Sudbury Star Staff

Tuesday, February 16, 2016 2:22:15 EST PM



According to reports, one person has been shot and the North Shore community of Sagamok is on lockdown as police look for what is being described as an 'active shooter.'

Reports on social media say the incident started this morning.

A police source told the Star that St. James Elementary School in Lively and Glad Tidings schools were also under a lockdown. The source said the alleged shooter may have children attending the schools and police feared he might be heading there.

Just before 2 p.m., however, Greater Sudbury Police said what it called 'hold and secure' protocols were cancelled.

"Individuals directly involved in the investigation were believed to be associated to persons who may frequent these two schools," Sudbury police said in a release.

"Therefore, as a precaution it was desirable to secure the schools in question due to this



on-going situation.

“The crime being investigated in the Massey area is not related to the schools. The school continues to function normally as there is no threat.”

Police officials now believe the shooter is still in Sagamok.

“The community of Sagamok is currently under a lockdown due to an armed member of the community at large.” one post on Facebook said. “All residents are asked to stay indoors, lock their doors and draw their curtains.”

Another said there are unconfirmed reports of one person being shot. The post also said there was a heavy police presence in the community and the OPP helicopter is on the scene.

Chief Paul Eshkakogan has issued a statement to community members, telling them to take precautions and that the OPP and Anishnawbek Police Service are investigating.

Sagamok is a first nations community about 120 km west of Sudbury.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.thesudburystar.com/2016/02/16/active-shooter-in-sagamok--reports>

## **RCMP investigating Onion Lake Cree Nation assault involving 9 people**

**RCMP say there's no risk to the public**

CBC News Posted: Feb 15, 2016 7:05 PM CT Last Updated: Feb 16, 2016 7:17 AM CT



The Onion Lake RCMP detachment is warning people on the First Nation about an ongoing incident. (CBC)

After responding to an incident at a house Monday morning on the Onion Lake Cree Nation, RCMP say they were responding to an assault complaint at a residence that involved nine different people.

All nine people, seven men and two women were arrested and taken into custody without incident, RCMP said in a series of Tuesday morning tweets.

Police said they are still investigating the incident, and asked "the public to please respect the boundaries police have in place so they can continue their ongoing investigation.

At approximately 5:50 p.m. CST Monday, RCMP began tweeting that they were responding to an incident at a house, warning people to stay away from the area.

They said there was no risk to public safety. They also asked people who live in the area to stay inside their homes.

The Onion Lake Cree Nation straddles the border between Alberta and Saskatchewan, about 50 kilometres north of Lloydminster.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatchewan/onion-lake-rcmp-respond-to-incident-1.3449444>

## **Sentences for male abusers too lenient, some Inuit women say**

**“A lot of victims and families believe the sentences are too short”**

JIM BELL, February 16, 2016 - 4:00 pm



The board of Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada poses Feb. 12 for a group photo at the end of their four-day pre-inquiry MMIW consultation meeting in Ottawa last week. Pauktuutit will team up with Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and Tungasuvvingat Inuit to ensure the federal government's upcoming inquiry on missing and murdered Indigenous women takes Inuit-specific issues into account. (PHOTO BY JIM BELL)

OTTAWA — An old complaint surfaced last week at a meeting of the Pauktuutit national Inuit women's organization in Ottawa: that northern courts are too lenient on offenders convicted of violent crimes against Inuit women.

“A lot of victims and families believe the sentences are too short,” one participant said.

The issue arose during Pauktuutit's pre-inquiry consultation meeting, held over four days at an Ottawa hotel, on missing and murdered Indigenous women.

Participants included 30 people flown to Ottawa from small communities across the Arctic, Pauktuutit board members, staff from Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and Tungasuvvingat Inuit, representatives of the Saturviit Inuit Women's Association of Nunavik and the AnânauKatiget Tumingit Labrador Inuit Women's Association, as well as observers from the Government of Nunavut, the federal government and Makivik Corp.

The free-flowing discussion did not follow a rigid agenda and participants were free to share their views and experiences on any topic at any time.

During conversations on the justice system, some participants said many Inuit women do not feel protected by the courts.

And some questioned the effect of the Supreme Court of Canada's Gladue decision, which requires that judges take an Aboriginal offender's special circumstances into account when calculating sentences.

"The get less time because they are Inuit. People are still concerned about the sentences being lenient," said Annie Buchan of Cambridge Bay, a former Pauktuutit board member.

This echoes complaints that Pauktuutit made in the early 1990s, when the organization called for an inquiry into sentencing practices in the Northwest Territories, alleging Inuit women victimized by violent crime were denied the right to personal security.

Qajaq Robinson, a lawyer with Borden Ladner Gervais, explained that the Gladue decision, which dates to 1999, is a response to the grossly disproportionate number of Aboriginal people serving time Canadian prisons.

And it means that in crafting sentences, judges must look at the backgrounds of Aboriginal offenders.

"The courts have to look at how the history of colonialism leads to turmoil in the communities," Robinson said.

And one participant said there are already too many men held at territorial correctional centres.

"Sometimes men plead guilty even when they are not guilty," she said.

Other complained about the lengthy periods of time — sometimes two to three years — between the laying of a charge and the resolution of the charge in court.

This means that by the time a trial starts, the victim and perpetrator may have already reconciled.

“By the time they have gone through the process of healing and forgiving, they have to go to court,” she said.

Robinson said these delays are not unique to the North, and that courts across the country are overwhelmed with criminal cases.

“That’s a phenomenon that you see across the North and even in Ontario at the courthouse on Elgin and Laurier,” Robinson said.

Other participants complained that female crime victims in small Inuit communities don’t get enough information about the progress of cases in which they’re complainants and don’t get enough information from the National Parole Board.

Throughout their discussions, participants — many of whom are family members of murdered and missing Inuit women and girls — made harrowing disclosures of homicides and sexual assaults committed primarily by community and family members.

This means that for Pauktuutit, an Inuit-specific approach to the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women means emphasizing the lack of healing and violence prevention measures in small communities.

**Direct Link:**

[http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674sentences\\_for\\_male\\_abusers\\_too\\_lenient\\_some\\_inuit\\_women\\_say/](http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674sentences_for_male_abusers_too_lenient_some_inuit_women_say/)

## **Police search for Trystan Ashley Sago, 32, as Sagamok Anishnawbek First Nation on lockdown**

**Stay indoors, lock your door and close your curtains says Chief**

CBC News Posted: Feb 16, 2016 1:47 PM ET Last Updated: Feb 16, 2016 9:00 PM ET



An emergency lock down is underway at Sagamok First Nation near Massey. Residents are advised to remain inside with the doors locked until police say it's safe. (sagamok.ca)

Police say they are searching for a man in the community of Sagamok Anishnawbek, Trystan Ashley Sago, 32, whom they consider to be 'armed and dangerous'.

The community, which is located west of Sudbury, is under an emergency lockdown after officers said they responded to a call for a firearms-related incident around 9:30 a.m.



The community of Sagamok Anishnawbek is on lockdown as police search for Trystan Ashley Sago, 32, who is a suspect in what police call a firearms-related incident that happened in the community Tuesday morning. (Ontario Provincial Police)

Officers say Sago is the outstanding suspect in the incident. Police describe him as a man of First Nations descent, 5'11" in height and weighing about 185 pounds.

They are asking people not to approach the suspect if they see him, but to call 911.

Emergency response teams, canine and tactical units are all on hand.

Biidaaban Kinoomaagegamik and Shiki Waase Aabin Binoojiinh Gamik are on lockdown as are other band operated buildings.

Police are asking members to stay indoors, lock the doors and close the curtains until OPP and the Anishnawbek Police Service declare it is safe.

The chief, Paul Eshkakogan, and council said they will let people know when the lockdown is lifted.

Meanwhile, Greater Sudbury Police Service said the "Hold & Secure" at two Greater Sudbury area schools has been cancelled, as individuals directly involved in the Massey-area investigation were thought to frequent Glad Tidings in Sudbury and St. James School in Lively.

Sudbury police said the crime being investigated in the Massey area was not related to the schools, and that the situation in Massey is being investigated by the Ontario Provincial Police.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/sudbury/sagamok-first-nation-lockdown-1.3450320>

## **Treatment of Inuit in Quebec jails called 'unacceptable' by ombudsman**

**Report notes dramatic rise in number of Inuit in provincial jails, from 549 to 898 over last 6 years**

CBC News Posted: Feb 18, 2016 12:18 PM ET Last Updated: Feb 18, 2016 2:21 PM ET



Quebec ombudsman Raymonde Saint-Germain has made 30 recommendations to improve the treatment of Inuit in the provincial justice system.

Quebec's ombudsman has released a scathing report on the treatment of Inuit in the provincial justice system.

Raymonde Saint-Germain describes the conditions of people arrested and convicted as "unacceptable."

She says the detention conditions are "below current standards" and infringe on the constitutional right to human dignity.

The ombudsman's office visited three villages in Nunavik, the Inuit territory of about 11,000 people in northern Quebec, as part of the investigation. In Nunavik, officials witnessed serious violations of detainees' rights.

Among Saint-Germain's concerns:

- Holding cells are often unsanitary and overcrowded.

- Cell mates with "incompatible profiles" are thrown together, creating a dangerous situation inside the jail.
- People arrested in Nunavik are detained 24 hours a day, which doesn't happen anywhere else in the province.
- The wait for a bail hearing can be as long as 10 days.
- The lack of videoconferencing technology and jails in northern Quebec means millions of dollars are spent transferring the accused to Amos for pre-trial detention. Amos is 600 kilometres northwest of Montreal, but prisoners are often routed through Montreal and St-Jérôme.
- Detention so far from home means family members aren't able to visit those detained.

## Ombusman calls for improvements



Raymonde Saint-Germain says the detention conditions of Inuit in Quebec infringe on the right to human dignity. (Radio-Canada)

Saint-Germain made 30 recommendations to the province, including:

- Lower the occupancy rate in detention cells in Nunavik.
- Ensure that detention areas and bedding are always clean.
- Allow detainees to spend time outdoors by providing them with secure space for that purpose.
- Change the angle of cameras so that toilets cannot be viewed on screen.
- Ensure that suicide intervention equipment is available and that officers can use it correctly.
- Overcome the language barrier.

Her report also notes a dramatic rise in the number of Inuit in provincial jails. That number has increased to 898 from 549 in the past six years.



Saint-Germain said improved social services, including treatment for substance abuse, would help address the problem.

"Over-reliance on the courts and the resulting incarceration does nothing to solve social problems," she said.

"More has to be done for social progress in Nunavik."

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/inuit-quebec-justice-system-1.3453390>

## Aboriginal Education & Youth

### Record number of teachers assemble to talk traditional learning

It's not just about curriculum

February 12, 2016 by: Frank Giorno



*Vice-Principal Wayne Potts of Kattawapiskak Elementary School in Attawapiskat delivers an update on the school's new initiatives. Frank Giorno for TimminsToday*

The largest ever gathering of First Nation educators in Northeastern Ontario convened at Northern College in Timmins to celebrate the 25th annual Great Moon Gathering.

A total of 350 delegates have registered to attend the two-day conference consisting of 48 workshops and other events including the keynote speech on Thursday by Dr. Shirley Cheechoo, acclaimed filmmaker and the chancellor of Brock University.

"The purpose of the Great Moon Gathering is to improve the awareness of First Nation traditional culture as well curriculum for each educational authority to improve the class room experience of indigenous youth," explained Michael Baker, vice president of finance, administration and aboriginal services at Northern College.

One of those attending the GMG was John Beck from the Moose Cree First Nation and one of the organizers of the very first event.

“The Great Moon Gathering is not strictly about curriculum concerns of literacy, numeracy, but to reflect on the traditional lifestyle of the communities,” Beck said.

“We bring in teachers to reflect on the culture and the educational needs of the community,” he added. “But it is not only for teachers, educational assistants and others involved with education are also participating.”

Beck explained that many teachers come from outside of the eight Cree communities in Northeastern Ontario that make up the Mushkegowuk Territory. The Great Moon Gathering is a great resource for them to learn more about Cree culture and language.

The gathering also enables educators for the isolated communities to meet and network with each other.

Usually the event is held in one of the eight educational authorities Beck said but since this was the 25th anniversary and a large contingent was expected, Timmins was selected to accommodate the demand.

Last year the GMG was held in Kashechewan, Ontario.

This year, educators from Kapuskasing attended representing the Kap-Kash First Nation school established for students who were moved there because of last spring’s flooding.

They joined the educational authorities from Attawapiskat, Peawanuck, Kashechewan, Fort Albany, Moose Cree, Taykwa Tagamou, Chapleau Cree and Missanabie Cree.

But the annual GMG also attracts those interested in First Nations education from as far away as Thunder Bay and Sault Ste. Marie.

There was a sharing of success and challenges from schools in the Mushkegowuk Territories.

Peetabeck Academy in Fort Albany reported on its Cree language initiative that is continuing despite lack of funding because it is important to community.

St. Andrew’s school in Kashechewan has implemented a breakfast program to help students get a good start to the school day.

Francine J. Wesley Secondary School in Kashechewan has introduced a success through technology program to help empower students by using technology to express themselves.

The Kap-Kash School has focused on building pride and team building through their after school program.

The Delores D. Echum Composite School in Moose Factory also introduced a Cree language program that combines traditional based teaching in an outdoor setting.

Vezina Secondary School in Attawapiskat has introduced a school attendance retention program through the teaching of traditional crafts

The Kattawapiskak Elementary School, the permanent elementary school that opened last year in the community, is also focusing on introducing Cree language classes.

The day's events were capped with the screening of three films dealing with significant issues for Mushkegowuk First Nations communities.

After the Last River, a film directed by Victoria Lean connects personal stories from Attawapiskat that investigates the impact of the De Beer's Victor Mine on the community and the environment. Attawapiskat faces numerous crises but according to the film maker, still cannot benefit directly from the revenue generated by the mine's operation.

Moose River Crossing is a film written and directed by Dr. Shirley Cheechoo and is about six survivors of residential schools who meet on the way to a residential school reunion. Each carries emotional scars from that experience.

Trick or Treaty, directed by Alanis Obomsawin looks at the deception used by representatives of the Ontario and Canadian governments in getting First Nations to sign Treaty 9 in 1905.

After the movies, Northern College hosted a round dance for the delegates to the Great Moon Gathering

Northern College last year signed a protocol with the First Nations communities in which the college pledged itself to become the post secondary institution of choice for First Nation students.

On Friday February 12, Dr. Jean Clinton, professor of child psychiatry at McMaster University and an education advisor for the Premier of Ontario will be the guest speaker.

**Direct Link:** <https://www.timminstoday.com/local-news/record-number-of-teachers-assemble-to-talk-traditional-learning-196885>

## **First female Aboriginal Dean appointed at Lakehead**

Create: 02/13/2016 - 02:34

[Rick Garrick - Wawatay News](#)



Lakehead University's recent selection of Angelique EagleWoman as Canada's first female Aboriginal dean of law is an encouraging sign for First Nation leaders.

"I met the new dean and I think she is extremely brilliant and smart and charismatic," says Deputy Grand Chief Derek Fox. "I think she is going to do a good job with the school. Overall, it is not just the Aboriginal students, I think (of) the law school as part of the community, part of the NAN community, part of the First Nations, part of Thunder Bay, so I think she is going to bring all of those people together and make a great law school."

EagleWoman was introduced on Jan. 12 to a packed gathering at the Bora Laskin Faculty of Law's John N. Paterson Auditorium. A law professor and legal scholar at the University of Idaho College of Law in the United States, EagleWoman previously served as a tribal judge in four Tribal Court systems and as general counsel for her own tribe, the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate in Dakota. She officially begins her role as law school dean in May.

Fox says the presence of the new dean will encourage First Nations students to apply at the law school.

"And I think it's going to inspire them to reach for the same kinds of goals," Fox says. "With a new dean there with an Aboriginal focus, there is going to be more focus on recruitment and just the way the law school functions." Fox says the presence of an Aboriginal law school dean would have encouraged him to study in Thunder Bay. He studied law at the University of Manitoba.

"I would have applied in Thunder Bay for sure if this law school was here," Fox says. "You know, with an Aboriginal dean, I always felt comfortable going to First Nations people for advice or any kind of help I could get, especially in those kinds of institutions."

EagleWoman says her grandmother told her that First Nations people needed law-trained people for the tribal court system and government.

“At a very early age I wanted to be a lawyer,” EagleWoman says. “And my family supported that. They had ceremonies for me and they stood behind me as I did that. And I have always tried to encourage others to think about a career in law.”

EagleWoman hopes her position as law school dean will encourage First Nations people to pursue a career in law. A Youtube video about her as a law student is available at: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=npchS8f14NI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=npchS8f14NI).

“Law touches every aspect of our lives and it is important that our voices be heard in forming that law and in responding to that law and in making that law,” EagleWoman says.

EagleWoman says her traditional beliefs have led her on her journey and allowed her to be a role model and to operate in two worlds.

“We want to reach out to the community and to get to know everyone in the area,” EagleWoman says. “In the US, my colleagues are a lot of Native people who have law degrees or are officials in government. We are a very small committed community, and I plan to build those relationships with the Aboriginal governments, the First Nation governments, the Metis Nation and Ontario and then beyond that. I want to meet and be a source of assistance in any way I can. I believe strongly in raising the quality of life for Indigenous peoples.”

Nishnawbe-Aski Legal Services Corporation executive director Celina Reitberger was thrilled at EagleWoman’s election.

“I was completely overcome with emotion actually at the fact that we now have the first female Aboriginal dean of a law school in Canada and it’s here in Thunder Bay,” Reitberger says. “It’s cutting edge and I can’t imagine anything but good things happening from here on in.”

EagleWoman, her husband and her son all do beadwork.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.wawataynews.ca/education/first-female-aboriginal-dean-appointed-lakehead>

## **A boost in Sudbury for Aboriginal students**

By Sudbury Star Staff

Friday, February 12, 2016 12:49:57 EST AM



Michael Jacko, left, a graduate of the Line Crew Ground Support program offered through Infrastructure Health and Safety, and Reg Canard, skills development co-ordinator at Gezhtoojig Employment Training Centre in Sudbury, Ont., were on hand at the centre for a funding announcement by the Ontario government for aboriginal students on Thursday February 11, 2016. The centre will receive more than \$539,000 over two years to provide 48 students the opportunity to complete the Line Crew Ground Support program with the possibility of more training at Cambrian College. Cambrian College received more than \$138,000 over two years to provide six aboriginal students from Northwestern Ontario with training in the college's Industrial Mechanical Millwright Technical program. John Lappa/Sudbury Star/Postmedia Network

### ***Two institutes get more than \$600,000 to help with education***

A native training in Sudbury will receive \$539,826 over two years to provide 48 learners with the opportunity to complete the Line Crew Ground Support Program.

The Gezhtoojig Employment and Training Centre students may then continue their studies at Cambrian College, officials announced Thursday. In addition, Cambrian will receive \$138,156 over two years to enroll six aboriginal students from northwestern Ontario in the Industrial Mechanical Millwright Technical Program at Cambrian's Sudbury campus.

When their studies are complete, Resolute Forest Products will hire those students.

Both Sudbury projects are receiving support from Ontario's Targeted Initiatives Fund. The province is investing \$3 million in 2015-16 to support 20 projects at post-secondary education and training institutions, community-based organizations and other service delivery partners.

"The Targeted Initiative Fund supports innovative and thoughtful approaches to helping Aboriginal learners achieve successful outcomes and I'm thrilled that both the Gezhtoojig Employment and Training Centre and Cambrian College are receiving support for projects that will benefit students in Sudbury and other Northern communities for years to come," Sudbury Liberal MPP Glenn Thibeault said in a release.

Cambrian College said it welcomed the funding. "Cambrian College has a long history of supporting Aboriginal learners from across the North," said Bill Best, president of Cambrian.

"We are pleased to be able to partner with the Province of Ontario and Gezhtoojig Employment and Training Centre to play a role in providing so many Aboriginal learners with the educational foundation upon which to launch exciting careers in the power and forestry industries."

The Aboriginal Institutes Consortium -- a group of Aboriginal controlled post-secondary education and training institutes -- will also receive support to standardize and harmonize how they collect student and program data to help to monitor the performance of programs and services offered to Aboriginal learners.

The province said the announcement reflects its June 2015 commitment for stable funding of Aboriginal post-secondary education totaling \$97 million over three years, including an additional \$5 million to support the sustainability of Ontario's nine Aboriginal-owned and operated postsecondary education and training institutes located throughout the province.

"Investing in the talent and skills of First Nation, Metis, and Inuit learners is one of the many steps on Ontario's journey of healing and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples," the government said. "It reflects the government's commitment to work with Indigenous partners, creating a better future for everyone in the province."

**Direct Link:** <http://www.thesudburystar.com/2016/02/12/a-boost-in-sudbury-for-aboriginal-students>

## Canada must keep aboriginal families intact

By [Craig and Marc Kielburger](#)

Friday, February 12, 2016 6:44:35 EST PM



Cindy Blackstock (R), executive director of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society, speaks during a news conference regarding a ruling by the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal with Assembly of First Nations National Chief Perry Bellegarde in Ottawa on January 26, 2016. REUTERS/Chris Wattie

Wisps of white smoke from smouldering sweetgrass and sage curl above a small group sitting in a circle. The soothing scent seeps into the cedar planks of this traditional First Nations sweat lodge nestled inside the sweeping modern glass and brick curves of an urban building in downtown Ottawa.



The Circle of Care program is where indigenous families come to prevent their children from being torn away from their homes. It's an initiative run by the Wabano Centre, which provides medical and mental health services for aboriginal people in eastern Ontario.

Almost half of Canadian children in foster care are aboriginal, even though indigenous people make up less than five per cent of the population, according to the 2011 census.

What's particularly gut-wrenching is the majority of aboriginal children are placed in care not because of parental abuse, but because their families are poor.

Problems like substandard housing conditions and nutrition lead to charges of neglect, say First Nations child advocate Cindy Blackstock and Gina Metallic, co-ordinator of the Wabano Circle of Care program. Aboriginal groups estimate Canadian First Nations children spent more than 66 million nights apart from their families, in foster care or group home, from 1989 to 2012.

So we applaud the recent Canadian Human Rights Tribunal ruling that states the Canadian government has discriminated against indigenous children. Canada has continued the cycle of harm and trauma caused by the residential schools. It's time to invest in initiatives, like the Circle of Care, that keep families together.

In that program, families who have had -- or are at risk of having -- their children taken away sit in a circle with a child protection worker assigned to their case. A mediator helps both sides discuss the family's challenges, like addictions, and reach a common agreement on solutions that will allow the child to stay, or reunite, with their parents.

The initiative uses traditional practices to help families feel comfortable with the process. Parents can incorporate any rituals they wish, such as smudges, drumming and the passing of a talking shell or feather to give everyone equal opportunity to speak. The family may also bring in tribal elders to advise or speak on their behalf.

Circle of Care is also educating non-indigenous children's aid workers to the distinct needs and culture of aboriginal families. It's a model worth copying across the country given Circle of Care has surpassed provincially set goals for successfully keeping families together.

Blackstock told us about another interesting solution in the U.S. that's worth considering. The Family Unification Program helps Native American families overcome poverty-related issues that threatened the welfare of their children. The successful pilot project allowed U.S. children's aid workers to give native families vouchers of up to \$14,000 to pay for necessities, like housing upgrades, utility bills, or nutritious food.

The US\$15-million project improved conditions enough that among 16,000 participating families, an incredible 90 per cent of those at risk of having a child taken were able to stay together. And where a child had already been placed in care, 62 per cent of families who took part in the program were reunited. The program also has an impressive payback, saving governments an estimated US\$22 million.

We work with so many incredible young aboriginal people and have witnessed the potential they have to be leaders and change makers in their communities. Every time a child is ripped from their parents and home, their potential is diminished. This doesn't have to continue. Canada can keep more indigenous families together and invest in solutions that empower our indigenous youth.

*Craig and Marc Kielburger founded Free The Children, Me to We and We Day. Visit [we.org](http://we.org) for more information.*

**Direct Link:** <http://www.lfpress.com/2016/02/12/canada-must-keep-aboriginal-families-intact>

## **B.C. ministry bars Metis toddler from attending event in her honour**



Laura Kane, The Canadian Press

Published Friday, February 12, 2016 2:31PM PST

Last Updated Friday, February 12, 2016 2:39PM PST

VANCOUVER - A foster mother fighting to adopt a Metis toddler she has raised since birth says she's outraged that British Columbia's Children's Ministry has barred the girl from attending a cultural event in her honour.

The Vancouver Island woman, who cannot be identified, said the ministry has told her the girl will not be allowed to attend a fundraiser and potluck hosted by the B.C. Metis Federation on Saturday.

“It made no sense,” she said. “Here they are saying that cultural identity is important and yet at the same time, they're not allowing her to take part in this cultural activity and not allowing her to be in a culturally sensitive home.”

She and her husband have launched a court petition to adopt the two-and-a-half-year-old girl. The ministry is fighting the adoption because it plans to move her to Ontario to live with her older siblings, who she has never met.

The foster mother is Metis, while the caregivers in Ontario are not, pitting the importance of indigenous culture against blood relatives.

The ministry said the gathering was advertised as an opportunity to meet the toddler, which is a violation of legislation that protects the identity of children in government care.

“Supporting children to participate in cultural events is entirely consistent with B.C.'s child welfare legislation and in their best interests,” the ministry said in a statement.

“However, the legislation also has provisions to protect the identity of any child who is receiving services from the ministry.”

The ministry retains legal guardianship of foster children, so it does have the power to prevent the child from attending the event.

The foster mother said she has taken great care to keep the girl's identity private, especially in the media. She said the ministry's explanation appears to be an “excuse” and suggested the government was trying to avoid further publicity about the case.

“We go to church every Sunday. Everybody there knows who she is. She lives in the community. Everybody on the street knows who she is,” said the woman.

“We are more interested than anyone in protecting her in every possible way, but you can't shelter her and keep her in the house.”

The foster mother still plans to attend Saturday's event, which is set to feature Metis jiggers and fiddlers, fundraising for the family's legal bills and a chance for the community to meet and support the family.

Keith Henry, president of the B.C. Metis Federation, has written a letter to Children's Minister Stephanie Cadieux and Premier Christy Clark demanding that they reverse the decision.

“We have every right to share culture with this family,” he said in an interview. “What they're doing is basically saying to the rest of the Metis community, 'If you fight us, this is going to be what your consequences are.' That's ridiculous.”

Henry's organization has filed an application to intervene in the foster parents' court case.

A B.C. Supreme Court judge has yet to decide whether to allow the foster parents' petition to proceed. The ministry has argued it is an abuse of process since a judge already dismissed a similar petition filed by the couple last year.

If the judge denies the petition, the girl could be moved to Ontario shortly after.

**Direct Link:** <http://bc.ctvnews.ca/b-c-ministry-bars-metis-toddler-from-attending-event-in-her-honour-1.2776111>

## Six Nations Polytechnic to offer course in disappearing language

Cayuga community sees the program in Ogwehoweh as an academic lifeline to the heart of their culture.

**By: Louise Brown** GTA, Published on Mon Feb 15 2016

Among the Babel of global dialects exploding across Canada, one old home-grown language is in a race against extinction.

The language of the Cayuga people — one of the Six Nations of the Grand River, just west of the GTA — is fighting to survive while the last 49 native speakers are still alive to pass the torch. In a bid to breathe new life into the vanishing language, the community has been running preschool programs, elementary Cayuga immersion and post-secondary diplomas in the language.

But now Cayuga — and Mohawk, its more widely used cousin in the Iroquois language family — are getting a boost in recognition. The languages will be the subject of a new three-year Bachelor of Arts degree offered by Six Nations Polytechnic.

It's the first time Queen's Park has permitted a First Nations-run post-secondary institute to offer a degree of its own, and the Six Nations community sees the program in Ogwehoweh, which refers to both languages, as an academic lifeline to the heart of their cultures.

"Cayuga is close to extinction; it's in a very fragile state but we need it for our traditional cultural activities and institutions," said Rebecca Jamieson, president of Six Nations Polytechnic, who has studied Cayuga but not yet mastered speaking it.



"Faith Keeper" Fran Henry is planning to enrol in the bachelor's degree program in Cayuga, which she says is deeply intertwined with "who my people are."

"Our language is central to our culture and spirituality, but it's suffered a decline over the past 100 years from a number of factors, not the least of which was residential schools.

The suppression of the language happened through assimilation policies that didn't just discourage, but actually forbid their use."

Now people can earn a three-year degree in the language, which also "supports the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which called for postsecondary institutions to create degree programs in indigenous languages," said MPP Reza Moridi, Ontario's minister of training, colleges and universities, in a recent ceremony to launch the degree program.

Lori Skye-LaForme's father used to speak a few "disciplinary words" to her in Cayuga when she was young — "Come and eat!" "Behave yourself." But when he took her to the longhouse for ceremonies, which "is our way of giving thanks," she says, "I couldn't understand what they were saying. But when you get older, you get a totally different perspective and want to understand your culture."

She enrolled in a diploma program in Cayuga at night through Six Nations Polytechnic, and when she went to the longhouse recently for the traditional Six Nations Midwinter ceremony, "I actually understood enough to know where we were in the ceremony. It filled me with gratitude."

Now Skye-LaForme wants to take the degree program. "I want to learn more. I'm still nowhere near fluent. It's difficult. But I have some aunts left who speak it."

Fran Henry also has applied to take the BA in Cayuga, which she has been studying at night for nearly two years.

"My mother was in residential school and was stripped of her identity and her language. It's in our blood, our culture, our history," said Henry, 55, who is a "faith keeper" at the longhouse and wants to be able to use it there as well.

"I don't want to blend in with the mainstream. I want to be part of who my people are, and the language is intertwined with that. In a way, it's like an Italian who doesn't feel really Italian if they don't speak the language." Her uncle Reg Henry devised the written version of this historically oral language; it's called the Henry Orthography.

"It's who we are. If we lose it, we're not Ogwehoweh any more."

**Direct Link:** <http://www.thestar.com/yourtoronto/education/2016/02/15/six-nations-polytechnic-to-offer-course-in-disappearing-language.html>

## **First Nations canoe project at Burnaby school a big success**

A traditional women's canoe built at Gilpin Elementary School over three months by Squamish First Nation artist Aaron Nelson-Moody strengthens ties with local First Nation



Women and girls at Gilpin Elementary School brush off a traditional Coast Salish women's canoe with cedar bows at a dedication ceremony in the school's gymnasium recently. The canoe, called a skumay, was built at the school over three months by Squamish First Nation artist Aaron Nelson-Moody. Photograph By Cornelia Naylor

*The Burnaby School District would like to acknowledge and thank the Coast Salish Nations of Musqueam, Tsleil-Waututh and Squamish, on whose traditional territory we teach, learn and live.*

Those words sounded pretty profound to Gilpin Elementary School mom Gillian Bassett when she first heard them read out – as per Burnaby school district policy – at the beginning of a school assembly last year.

But she didn't know what they meant, and neither did the kids she asked.

"I sort of vaguely understood they had something to do with aboriginal people, First Nations, but not the significance of the different groups and where they were located," said Bassett, who came to Canada from England four years ago.

Then-secretary of the school's PAC, she set out to raise awareness, teaming up with then-principal Sean Gaster (who has since moved to Edmonds Community School).

Their efforts – helped along by a \$3,500 Arts Starts grant and a large chunk of old-growth red cedar made available by hereditary Squamish First Nation Chief Bill Williams – culminated last month in the presentation to the school of a skumay, a traditional women's canoe built by Squamish First Nation artist Aaron Nelson-Moody

Nelson-Moody, whose Squamish name means Splashing Eagle – Splash for short – spent three months at the school, three days a week, interacting with students and building the stubby vessel traditionally used by Squamish women and girls to ply the swamps and narrow streams of their territory.

“The women would paddle up next to like salmon berries, smack the bush with their paddle and all the berries would fall into the canoe,” Splash told the NOW. “They would also pick things like bog cranberry, wild rice, some of the bulrush tubers and the bulrush stalk, used for weaving.”

There was no mention during his sessions with students about the problems aboriginal girls and women face in Canada today, but those issues weren’t far below the surface, according to Splash.

“We’re implicitly dealing with it because we’re talking about the alternative, the kind of respect that women had, the kind of work that women historically did and are still doing,” he said. “The roles change, of course, as the world changes, but the mutual respect and mutual support doesn’t have to change.”

Splash, who has worked in schools for 20 years, said he prefers projects like the Gilpin canoe that allow him to stay awhile and get below the surface of kids’ understanding of his culture.

“People have a bunch of stuff in their minds about aboriginal people,” he said. “There’s a kind of nebulous identity out there, so they’re kind of asking about that. Then, when they start to learn a bit more, the questions actually get really interesting.”

That kind of learning was exactly what Bassett had envisioned when she first started thinking about bringing a First Nations artist-in-residence into the school.

“I thought it would be really nice to have something deep, you know, where the kids can build on knowledge, something deep rather than broad,” she said.

For district aboriginal resource teacher Tracy Healey, who’s been with the district since 1998, the timing of the project and the choice of a local First Nations artist couldn’t have been better.

“The ministry is doing this big push with the new curriculum about embedding aboriginal knowledge into the curriculum,” she said, “and teachers have no idea how to do that or even where to start, and the place to start is the traditional territory that you’re on. Find out about the local First Nations people and reach out to them and build relationships with them.”

For the Gilpin project, it helped that Splash is both an artist and an educator, according to Bassett, who said her two boys came home bursting with information about the Squamish people during the project.



“My youngest son is in Grade 1, and he is fully informed on the salmon and the importance of salmon to the Squamish people,” Bassett said. “I mean, it’s amazing. They sort of hold forth at the dinner table.”

Normally, she said, it’s hard to get her boys to say anything about their day at school.

She credits the difference to the multi-sensory nature of the canoe project and to Splash’s charismatic teaching style.

For Splash, such projects are the way of the future if schools are serious about integrating an understanding of First Nations into every student’s learning.

“The big decision is whether you want a little bit of information out of a book or whether you want a relationship with local First Nations, and I think they’re trying to foster relationships,” said Splash of schools that take up projects like the canoe at Gilpin. “Just memorizing facts isn’t really what most schools are after. It’s where they start, but, in the end, we’re trying to develop a better relationship between Canada and First Nations.”

- See more at: <http://www.burnabynow.com/news/education/first-nations-canoe-project-at-burnaby-school-a-big-success-1.2174741#sthash.SC5nBdjt.dpuf>

## **SD8 offers more First Nations scholarships**



Secretary-treasurer Kim Morris announced an increase in funding for aboriginal education scholarships at a recent Kootenay Lake School District board meeting.

*by Will Johnson - Nelson Star  
posted Feb 17, 2016 at 10:00 AM*

Demonstrating their continued commitment to aboriginal education, the Kootenay Lake school district has raised the number of available scholarships for First Nations students. “We’re really excited to announce that there are now 12 scholarships available, and the amount offered will be raised from \$750 to \$1,000,” SD8 secretary-treasurer Kim Morris told trustees Tuesday.

Superintendent Jeff Jones believes this will make an impact in aboriginal-identified students' lives.

“One way we support our aboriginal students is to help them see it is possible to pursue post-secondary opportunities after completing K-12,” said Superintendent Jeff Jones, who added the increase was made possible by a carried-over surplus.

Aboriginal education is a top priority in the new curriculum, and the district has been making a concerted effort lately to develop its relationship with First Nations. It recently introduced an acknowledgement of their traditional territories at the beginning of each meeting, and the board recently heard a presentation from teacher Shannon Lanaway on the topic.

“There’s a revival happening worldwide for aboriginal education,” Lanaway told the board. “This is changing the way we teach.”

Lanaway attended a conference on aboriginal education in which a Salmo Secondary teacher told her “I was sickened to learn Canada committed cultural genocide — I’m just starting to learn that as an educator.”

**Direct Link:** <http://www.nelsonstar.com/news/369139271.html>

## Ottawa must do more for Indigenous children

Canada will never be the country it was meant to be as long as denying support to the most vulnerable children remains government's default position



Cindy Blackstock (R), executive director of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society, speaks during a news conference regarding a ruling by the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal with Assembly of First Nations National Chief Perry Bellegarde in Ottawa, Jan. 26, 2016.

**By: Charlie Angus** Published on Thu Feb 18 2016

As I read the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal's damning ruling that denounced Canada for its long-standing racial discrimination against Indigenous children, I couldn't help but think of the recent funerals I have attended for Indigenous youth who had given up hope and committed suicide.

In fact, as the ruling came down late last month my office was trying to cut through the bureaucratic red tape of a young Cree teenager's tragic and brutal death so that the family could bury her body. She may become yet another statistic in the list of 600 plus young people who have considered or attempted suicide in the northern part of my Ontario riding since 2009.

Even at the height of regional suicide epidemics we see a bureaucratic lethargy or indifference that is chilling. There is nothing accidental about a culture of discrimination that has been entrenched since Confederation. Time after time, Health Canada and Indian Affairs turned down pleas for mental health services and suicide counselling.

The tribunal may have ruled on the discriminatory application of child welfare services, but that is just one example of the systemic mean-spiritedness that runs through every department that deals with Indigenous Canadians.

In the provincial systems, when a non-Indigenous child is found to be at risk, whether from poverty or neglect, child welfare workers have two choices: provide in-home support or, in certain extreme cases, remove the child into foster care. In the vast majority of cases the former is chosen because it has been long known that working with the child and family in the home environment creates more stability and improved childhood outcomes.

And yet for Indigenous children on reserve the standing practice of Indigenous Affairs is to incentivize the removal of children from the home. Just as shocking: the former deputy minister of Aboriginal Affairs, Michael Wernick (now Canada's top bureaucrat), told a parliamentary committee that the cost of providing support in the home for an Indigenous child was \$20,000. The cost of removing the child from the home was five times greater — at \$100,000 per intervention.

Rather than providing cheaper care that keeps families together and produces better outcomes for a child, we are choosing to spend more money to take children from their families and create discriminatory outcomes for Indigenous Canadians. No wonder there are now more children in government "care" than at the height of the residential school system.

The numbers of children who have fallen through the cracks or died in the child welfare system should make any parent in this country weep. And yet bureaucrats continue to come before committees to shrug their shoulders when asked about solutions.

So the question is: Where do we go in the wake of this ruling?

What is clear is that Canada will never be the country it was meant to be as long as these patterns of denying support to the most vulnerable children remains part of the operating culture of government.

Federal departments have been preparing for the Human Rights Tribunal to rule on this matter for 10 years. There are steps they can take immediately. For example, simply end the long-standing pattern of saying no to the most basic requests for child health care.

This parsimony is codified right down to the level of denying handicapped children access to proper wheelchairs, prescription medicine and emergency dental surgery.

As Cindy Blackstock, the executive director of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada, who fought this tribunal case on behalf of the children says, "the days of saying absolutely no to the needs of Indigenous children must be replaced with a culture of saying absolutely yes."

But making the transformation from a culture of deniability to a culture of accountability will require major investments. There is a budget coming up and it will be the first budget of this new government. This is a once-in-a-mandate opportunity to reverse entrenched systems of discrimination in Indigenous education, child welfare and health.

Hope and change are important, but money and action are needed now to truly improve outcomes. With meaningful investments that we know are needed now, with a simple fulfilment of our obligation to Indigenous communities, I hope my community — and our country — will see fewer funerals for our youth and more school graduations to celebrate.

Canada's future and our children deserve no less.

*Charlie Angus is the NDP Indigenous Affairs critic and Member of Parliament from Timmins-James Bay*

**Direct Link:** <http://www.thestar.com/opinion/commentary/2016/02/18/ottawa-must-do-more-for-indigenous-children.html>

## A welcoming shift in First Nations education



Ladysmith Secondary School Grade 12 students Sha-Lena Horne, Kyle Joe and Brittany Elliott inspect a massive burl that is part of the carving project underway in the school's foyer. Each student is poised to graduate this spring, and is an example of a positive trend for aboriginal learners across Vancouver Island.

by John McKinley - Nanaimo News Bulletin

posted Feb 18, 2016 at 1:00 PM

A rich smell of cedar seeps through the expansive foyer of Ladysmith Secondary School.

Rough-hewn planks bound to posts form walls and floor as a traditional Coast Salish house begins to take shape around students as they pore through textbooks and chat about teenage interests.

The house will be home to a two-year education project centred around a master carver. John Marston will be adzing out a welcoming figure as the student body's daily stream ebbs and flows around him, and he shares his wisdom with those who wish to learn.

Ultimately, the carved figure will become a token of the hospitality being offered those who walk in the school's front door. But the project itself — called Nutsumaat Syaays, or Working Together as One — is something more.

It is a manifestation of a welcoming process occurring behind the scenes that is quietly powering one of Vancouver Island's most significant education stories.

In a trend being repeated in many school districts across the Island, First Nations students are graduating in numbers unheard of a generation ago.

Those close to the situation credit the steady progress to a concentrated effort to create a sense of connection and belonging that may have been lacking in the past.

"It brings our culture into our school," Ladysmith student Brittany Elliott said.

"Our" is the possessive pronoun of choice for Elliott and her classmates Kyle Joe and Sha-lena Horne when talking to Black Press about LSS.

Members of the Cowichan and Stz'uminas First Nations, each student is actively involved in the school — be it in an academic, sports, or leadership role.

They talk quietly but with obvious affection about the classes and activities they enjoy, the teachers they like, the hum of the school's social life and their plans after high school.

Each is also on track to graduate this spring.

**According to** a report commissioned for the Assembly of First Nations chiefs, Canadian indigenous students were graduating high school at a rate of about 36 per cent just seven years ago — exactly half the overall national graduation rate.

In December of 2015, the provincial government announced B.C. Aboriginal completion rates had capped five years of steady improvement with a record high of 63 per cent.

The Port Alberni, Comox Valley, Qualicum and Sooke school districts all matched or exceeded the provincial rate last year. Nanaimo, Campbell River and Victoria missed the cut, dropping to 58, 51 and 60 per cent respectively, but that was after each posted rates of 64 per cent in 2014.

However, with the overall B.C. completion rate hovering at 86 per cent, there is still work to be done to close the gap.

Chris Beaton is the executive director of the Nanaimo Aboriginal Centre, an independent First Nations service and advocacy group.

“Our vision is to support the vision of 100 per cent graduation,” he said. “You’re right that it’s trending in the right direction, but there is still a long way to go. I would challenge you to find anyone who is happy with the pace.”

Beaton said schools are succeeding when they create an environment that makes aboriginal learners feel at home.

“I’m seeing an indigenization of the curriculum,” he said. “We’re not pulling four kids out of the classroom and building dreamcatchers. The curriculum is embedded into the whole student body.”

**Front-and-centre** in the campaign are educators like Nanaimo-Ladysmith district vice-principal of aboriginal education Anne Tenning.

According to Tenning, her district has adopted the holistic approach of making sure a First Nations perspective is addressed in every aspect of school life.

“A focus is collective responsibility,” she said. “Students receive extra support and it is everyone in the system supporting.”

Part of that is adding visible First Nations components to everyday school routines that confirm the culture’s strong presence in the greater community. This includes initiatives like verbally recognizing traditional territories at public meetings, using films, books and essays created by Aboriginal thinkers and artists as resource material, and an elder-in-residence style program being piloted at Nanaimo District Secondary School.

But it goes beyond the exterior trappings and into what is actually being discussed in the classroom. The local Hul’qumi’num dialect being taught as a credit language course is a good example.

Just as significant are the serious talks taking place in class on the subject of colonialism and its effect on the indigenous population. Tenning said great effort has been made to inject First Nations issues and culture into the curriculum as living, breathing things.

“Before when we were studying First Nations people it was like we were studying people out of a museum,” she said.

The students back that up, saying their First Peoples English and B.C. First Nations Studies classes engaged them in a way previous English and Social Studies classes had not.

Joe appreciated the perspective offered on other First Nations across the country, while Elliott was interested in taking in how non-aboriginal classmates were exposed to aboriginal thinking and experiences.

One can't discount the significance of that change. Tenning, for example, had no knowledge of residential schools until she became an adult, despite the fact her mother attended one.

"I think back to when I was in high school and it had such a small presence," she said. "With this generation of learners it's becoming common knowledge."

**Discussions about** the residential school system may be helping today's students engage, but the system's legacy played a significant role in the education — or lack thereof — of their parents.

Beaton said poor experiences in the residential system embedded distrust for public education in a generation of First Nations people, which manifested itself in the way some encouraged their children. Beyond that, the fractured families the system created also took a toll.

"There's no handbook on parenting. You learn from your role models," he said. "My mom's role model was not my grandmother, it was staff at a residential school."

Tenning agreed the residential school legacy is an issue.

"That is definitely a challenge for a lot of families, rebuilding that trust," she said. "We are inviting them into the schools, finding ways to include families. There is so much of a difference that can make, not just to aboriginal students, but to all students."

Joe said his dad has talked to him about the racism he experienced in school, and his classmates agree that the environment today is much better for them than it was for their parents.

Instead of avoiding school, Horne and Elliott have embraced it. Each is planning to pursue a teaching degree after graduation.

Joe's immediate priority may be different — he wants to pursue an opportunity playing rugby — but his attitude about education can be boiled down to pure pragmatism.

"School is a very important thing because you can't get good jobs without going," he said.

**Beaton supports** the work being done by local schools, but says there is another element that has to part of the solution: community support outside the classroom.

He said with only 20 per cent of a child's time spent in the classroom, it is essential that we address what is going on in the other 80 per cent of their lives. Poverty, lack of skills training, food insecurity — getting your homework done can become secondary when your family is struggling to keep a roof over its head and food on the table.



He also stressed that education is not just a K-12 endeavour and work has to be done at the pre-school level. Free daycare with skilled early childhood educators would help tremendously.

On a more general level, Beaton supports a continued emphasis on creating a two-way street of community connection. He said there is little need for new standalone structures for Indigenous people.

Instead, the mission is to make indigenous culture an everyday aspect of the community, while at the same time making everyday aspects of the community part of indigenous culture.

He said it can be as simple as taking aboriginal kids using the Boys and Girls Club to a downtown yoga class so it feels like a natural option as they get older.

“I don’t need to build a new childcare program or a yoga studio,” he said.

Tenning said we are seeing progress in that area with an increased aboriginal presence on school clubs, teams and other initiatives.

“I think that it just happening naturally. Those extracurriculars are signs that they are connecting more to school,” she said.

Being able to work with teachers and other professionals who are aboriginal matters, as does seeing aboriginals in positions of influence, like Nanaimo’s new city manager. According to Beaton, every success story can feed another.

“Every indigenous person who breaks that glass ceiling becomes a role model,” he said.

Still, change is slow, and if the goal is to reach graduation parity, Is it going to take another generation to get there?

“I hope not,” Beaton said. “The conversation is beginning and we can’t stop it. I’m confident for the first time in my life that it will happen.””

### **Aboriginal completion percentage rates by district 2011-2015**

North Island 62 47 71 46 49

Campbell River 50 72 62 64 51

Port Alberni 56 73 67 58 68

Comox Valley 56 73 67 58 68

Qualicum 66 66 64 69 63

Nanaimo 52 50 56 64 58

Cowichan Valley 55 44 57 54 53

Victoria 54 61 57 64 60

Sooke 73 62 59 58 66

Saanich 43 40 50 51 27

BC Aboriginal 54 57 60 62 63

BC Overall 83 84 86 86 86

**Direct Link:** <http://www.nanaimobulletin.com/news/369330071.html>

## **First Nation spelling bee champs to move on to national competition**

Chief Poundmaker School hosts event April 8

JAYNE FOSTER , STAFF REPORTER / BATTLEFORDS NEWS-OPTIMIST  
FEBRUARY 18, 2016 07:57 AM



Believe and Achieve — that's the theme for the first ever First Nations Provincial Spelling Bee to be hosted by Chief Poundmaker School this spring.

The FNPSB will be held at the Don Ross Centre in North Battleford Friday, April 8. Finalists will qualify for a national spelling bee, presented by Spelling Bee of Canada in Toronto, Ont. Sunday, May 15.

Organizer Pauline Favel, a student support worker, is excited that Spelling Bee of Canada has endorsed the FNPSB as a regional competition. Nine winners will be recognized

locally and the first place winners from the bee's three categories will advance to the national spelling bee as Saskatchewan's only representative.

"This is a first ever for native people," says Favel. "Not just for Saskatchewan but all the provinces. We are taking a team from First Nation schools, all the winners are going to be First Nation students, and we're taking them to Toronto to compete with everybody else."

Favel says the FNPSB is an exciting initiative that promotes literacy, study skills, public speaking skills and healthy competition. The decision to participate empowers students to challenge themselves to be the best they can be.

It's another way to approach literacy, says Favel.

"It's not just spelling," she explains. "There are so many benefits to learning new words, expanding your vocabulary, the opportunity to public speak, the opportunity to travel. Some people probably haven't even been to North Battleford, never mind the opportunity to go to Toronto."

Favel says the initiative will showcase the talents of First Nation youth, their abilities and their strengths and the work First Nation schools are doing to improve literacy among their students.

"It's a benefit for all," she says.

Approximately 140 students have already registered, representing all the tribal councils of Saskatchewan plus independent First Nations, says Favel. Students are coming from as far north as Dillon on Peter Pond Lake. Eighteen schools of the approximately 72 eligible schools are represented.

"We are quite excited about it," she says. "It's been a labour of love."

Favel has seen the positive results a spelling bee can have on student achievement and engagement. Working in the File Hills area several years ago, she was involved at the school level in bringing the participants together, giving them the word lists and helping them study.

"I saw the excitement," she says.

When she came back to the Poundmaker First Nation area, she offered to co-ordinate a spelling bee at the school, inviting other tribal council schools. The following year another was held and it was moved to the Don Ross Centre in North Battleford.

This year, she and fellow organizers wanted to open it up to a provincial level, with the goal of going to nationals. With no provincial spelling bee in place since the demise of Canspell, they have found sanction with Spelling Bee of Canada, a not-for-profit grassroots organization established in the greater Toronto area in 1987.

It was decided the FNPSB bee would be open to First Nation students who attend federal schools, that is schools located on First Nations, funded through the federal government.

While there was interest from First Nation students who attend provincially-funded schools, as well as from non-First Nation students, they had to be turned down, at least for the first year.

"We didn't want to open that door this year because it's our first ever and we couldn't anticipate [response]. We'd be overwhelmed if we had another 100 or 200 kids who wanted to attend," says Favel.

They could possibly expand in the future, perhaps to métis students or First Nation students from provincial schools in the Battlefords – or further.

The interest certainly is there, she says.

To get the word out to all the First Nation schools, Favel contacted all the province's tribal councils in the fall and the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations help with faxing and emailing all their members and independent First Nations.

To fit the criteria for sanction by Spelling Bee of Canada, there was also the task of writing letters to sponsors for cash and trophies.

"To be a regional spelling bee, we have to give out cash prizes and trophies and go with their words," says Favel. "When I was co-ordinating the tribal council [bee], we gave out certificates and those are not costly."

Nor did they offer a lunch, which they plan to do this year.

"The only cost we incurred last year when we moved it to North Battleford was rental for the facility for the day, but with Spelling Bee protocols and guidelines, our costs are almost triple this year."

Happily, Favel says, the Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority has become the title sponsor. They will also be assisting with the expenses of the national level competition, she says.

A number of other sponsors are also on board, both corporate and private, she says.

Each participant has a registration fee of \$35, which goes to Spelling Bee of Canada. That organization provides an e-manual with all the words (there are 400) at primary, junior and intermediate levels. A CD with the proper pronunciation of the words is also available to help students study. They also provide a manual for the spelling bee officials.

Organizers have gone out of their way, says Favel, to make sure all participants, schools, parents and caregivers are well informed on how the event will be run and she expects the audience to be respectful of the competition process.

"I'm sure it's going to be run quite smoothly," she says.

Looking to next year, she says, the contacts to continue are now in place.

"All I would have to do again next year is communicate again to them."

But this year will always be the first.

"It's a first ever," says Favel. "Maybe they will make a movie about it!"

- See more at: <http://www.newsoptimist.ca/news/northwest-region/first-nation-spelling-bee-champs-to-move-on-to-national-competition-1.2176861#sthash.M8uSMhAm.dpuf>

## Campus place names to reflect indigenous presence

BETTY ANN ADAM, SASKATOON STARPHOENIX

Published on: February 18, 2016 | Last Updated: February 18, 2016 6:01 AM CST



Colin Tennent, associate vice-president and university architect, Facilities Management Division (L) and Graeme Joseph, team leader of First Nations, Métis and Inuit student success at the U of S, speak as media were given a sneak-peek tour of the soon-to-open Gordon Oakes Redbear Student Centre at the University of Saskatchewan, Dec. 15, 2015.

Elders Court will be the new name for a small parking turnaround at the University of Saskatchewan.

The gesture is part of a movement at the university that acknowledges the fact that Saskatchewan's history stretches much further back than the creation of the institution or the even the province or country, while acknowledging today's growing presence of indigenous students, staff and faculty, said Colin Tennent, university architect and associate vice-president of facilities management.

A soon-to-be installed sign at the turnaround between the Arts classroom wing and the College of Law will be a subtle reminder that the campus sits on Treaty Six territory. It's part of a plan to add indigenous names to places on campus and create displays of art and artefacts that will help to tell the story of the area's first peoples, Tennent said.

Some of the names will be in English, but some will likely also be in indigenous languages.

"We feel it's really important to recognize the cultures of (the indigenous population on campus) that are increasing in numbers year by year," Tennent said.

"It's highlighting and recognizing those people that are a part our history ... The fact First Nations held the lands that the university is sitting upon is critical, I think."

Naming places has cultural significance but also reflects a strengthening relationship between indigenous participants and the university, said Candace Wasacase-Lafferty, director of Aboriginal Initiatives, who has seen the evolution of the university's commitment to aboriginal inclusion in the 15 years she has worked there.

"It's starting to feel very natural ... It's no longer an unusual conversation," she said.

"Making these gestures, whether it's the Gordon Oakes Red Bear Student Centre or the naming of a street ... It signals a permanent, ongoing commitment," she said.

Raising awareness for all students becomes part of the education of the next generation of leaders, Wasacase-Lafferty said, noting buildings and colleges are already named to honour non-aboriginal people, and it's time to acknowledge aboriginal people too.

"It honours the contributions that have always been here, but now we're going to be a little bit more obvious about it."

"We've had indigenous people on our campus since the very beginning," she said, referring to Annie "Nan" McKay, a Metis woman who graduated in 1915 with a Bachelor's degree with honours in English and French, and who went on to a 44-year career with the University library.

Wasacase-Lafferty said she is aware that some non-indigenous people feel threatened by the growing influence of indigenous people on campus.

“I think change is hard for everybody ... As a First Nations person, we’re used to people not always being in favour of change and it’s scary (for them).

“If students are facing negativity, it’s an opportunity to grow and learn. In the real world there will be pushback ... We can’t create a bubble that protects people from that. I think we should have the opportunity to openly challenge back,” she said.

“I think it’s going to get harder before it gets easier. We still have lots of hurdles to get over, but that’s okay. The pursuit is an honourable one. There’s an honour in being the generation that shifts how Saskatchewan thinks.”

**Direct Link:** <http://thestarphoenix.com/news/saskatchewan/campus-place-names-to-reflect-indigenous-presence>

## Aboriginal Health

### **Plight of Inuit healing centre in Ottawa highlights North's lack of mental health care**

#### **'Where are people going to go, out on the street?' asks Nunavut Tunngavik vice-president**

By Sima Sahar Zerehi, [CBC News](#) Posted: Feb 15, 2016 4:00 AM CT Last Updated: Feb 15, 2016 7:23 AM CT



'Where are people going to go, out on the street? We have lots of people on the street right now homeless with addictions,' said James Eetoolook, Nunavut Tunngavik's vice-president. (Sima Sahar Zerehi/CBC)

News that an Inuit healing centre in Ottawa plans to close its doors because of a lack of federal funding has some thinking about the dire shortage of mental health and addiction services for Inuit, particularly in Nunavut.

Last week Tungasuvvingat Inuit, the organization that runs Mamisarvik Healing Centre, announced it will shut down the treatment facility unless it secures \$1 million in annual funding by the end of March.



Their core federal funding dried up in 2013 when the Harper government declined to renew funding to the Aboriginal Healing Foundation. The foundation was created to address the legacy of physical and sexual abuse suffered in Canada's residential school system.

## **'I started loving myself more'**

"It changed things for me dramatically," says Levi Nowdlak, a survivor of sexual abuse who was a client of the Mamisarvik Healing Centre as a teenager.



'I started loving myself more,' said Levi Nowdlak, a survivor of sexual abuse who was a client of the Mamisarvik Healing Centre as a teenager. (Levi Nowdlak)

"My family and myself noticed a big difference in me, I started loving myself more, having more respect for me and others around me, having less anger issues," she says. "It really helps people a lot and I'm sad to see it go."

Nowdlak says in addition to keeping Mamisarvik open in Ottawa, it would help if Nunavut had its own healing centre.

"It would be closer to home and more people would be willing to go to the centre I think if it was run in Iqaluit."

## **A single treatment facility for all Inuit**

"We don't have anything at all here in Nunavut," says James Eetoolook, vice-president of Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., pointing to reports from the RCMP in the territory on how a majority of the calls they receive are related to alcohol abuse.

"Where are people going to go, out on the street? We have lots of people on the street right now homeless with addictions."

The Canadian government has fallen short on the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's recommendations to fund more healing and treatment centres, Eetoolook says.

Jason Leblanc, the executive director of Tungasuvvingat Inuit, the group that runs Mamisarvik, agrees that more mental health and addiction centres are needed in the North.

"We support the idea that there would be treatment centres in communities within the territory," said Leblanc.

"In a perfect situation the continuum of care offers choices to people that they can get the help they need in the way that's most appropriate for them, some cases in community and some cases out of community."



'The fact that we only have one in our combined four regions says a lot about how little services we have available to us at this time,' said Natan Obed the President of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami. (Sima Sahar Zerehi/CBC )

Natan Obed the President of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami called the closure of the Mamisarvik "a big blow to the capacity we have within the overarching continuum of care for mental health."

Obed says considering the amount of concern about mental health there should be similar facilities in Inuit regions beside the one in Kuujuaq.

"The fact that we only have one in our combined four regions says a lot about how little services we have available to us at this time."

Obed says it isn't just Mamisarvik that was hurt by the shutting down of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation, other community-based Inuit-specific mental health service providers across the four Inuit regions were also forced to shut down.

"I do think that there needs to be a central investment which is then supported by provinces and territories," says Obed.

"This federal government provides me hope that that will happen, but we are a long way from that reality."

## **'Pay-as-you-go' model not working**

Leblanc said it's hard for Mamisarvik to get reliable federal funding because it's not located in the Inuit homeland. For the past three years Tungasuvvingat Inuit has been cobbling together money from various contracts to keep the centre running.

"We cut some of our cost, we redesigned some elements of the program, and we had some great support from some partners who were willing to, on a per diem basis, send clients and pay for those clients," Leblanc says.

The clients include the Government of Nunavut and Correctional Services Canada.

The Nunavut government is Mamisarvik's biggest client. They send approximately 60 people to the centre each year, Leblanc says. For an eight-week, 53-day residential program, which includes group and personal counselling and programming, the government pays \$22,260 per person.

Leblanc said over 700 Inuit have taken part in the residential program since 2003 with a majority of them coming from Nunavut.

## **Corrections 'sad to see it go'**

Correctional Services Canada uses the facility and programs for Inuit offenders at a rate of \$323.23 a day. They also use four beds at the centre for residency purposes at a cost of up to \$473,208 annually.

"We'll be very sad to see that healing centre go," said Kyle Lawlor, the regional communications manager for Correctional Services Canada.

"We do find these types of programs for our aboriginal and Inuit offenders very, very useful," Lawlor said.

According to Correctional Services Canada, there were 85 Inuit offenders in the Ontario region as of January 31.

Despite these partnerships, without renewed core funding, Mamisarvik will have to close down.

"Unfortunately the model of pay-as-you-go just isn't financially sustainable," said Leblanc.

CBC contacted the Government of Nunavut for comment but the government did not respond.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/plight-of-inuit-healing-centre-in-ottawa-highlights-north-s-lack-of-mental-health-care-1.3448218>

## Cree man embarks on healing journey around Nunavik

**"I've been holding onto that pain for 40 years"**

SARAH ROGERS, February 15, 2016 - 1:00 pm



John Clarence Kawapit joins hands with friends and family in prayer Jan. 30 in Whapmagoostui before Kawapit departed on his 12-day walk to Umiujaq. (PHOTO BY SAIGE MUKASH PHOTOGRAPHY)



Kawapit has helped building an igloo en route to Umiujaq, where he said he spent the warmest night of his journey. (PHOTO COURTESY OF J. KAWAPIT)



A crowd comes out to greet Kawapit when he arrived in Umiujaq Feb. 11. (PHOTO BY HEIDI KUMARLUK)

When John Clarence Kawapit returned home last fall after surviving a suicide attempt, he knew it was time to make some major changes.

The 46-year-old Cree man from Whapmagoostui, which neighbours the Nunavik community of Kuujjuaraapik, has struggled with alcohol dependency for almost his entire life.

“Everyone in the community knows me for my addiction,” Kawapit said. “I’ve been drinking my whole life.

“I lost everything. And I’ve been holding onto that pain for 40 years.”

But after surviving his suicide attempt, Kawapit held onto a sliver of hope. He decided he needed to channel what energy he had into “doing something, something physically difficult.”

Kawapit thought back to hunting trips he used to take with grandparents as a child; he would spend weeks out of the land, and even as a youth, recognized how rejuvenating it felt.

Inspired by walkers before him, Kawapit set out Jan. 30 from Whapmagoostui on what he’s called his healing journey, heading north up the Hudson Bay coast on foot.

Kawapit left on snowshoes with a sled in tow, carrying only the bare essentials: a tent, blankets, food and some extra clothing to navigate the roughly 200 kilometre stretch to Umiujaq, the next community north.

“I knew it would be hard,” he said. “And I suffered from the cold and hunger.”

There is little comparison though between those feelings to the suffering Kawapit said he’s endured through his life.

Kawapit said both of his parents were alcoholics, and encouraged him to drink beer from the time he was five years old.

He said he later suffered sexual abuse and he continued to drink alcohol to cover the feelings of shame he harboured.

He did marry, but later separated from his wife. Today, Kawapit has six children, the eldest aged 26, and the youngest aged just eight.

He’s had jobs over the years, but lost many due to his alcoholism.

So Kawapit’s walk, though tedious, has become a time for reflection and cleansing. “I cry a lot,” he said.

And Kawapit's had some help along the way, from friends who brought him food by snowmobile. He had help from passing hunters to build his first igloo, where he said he spent his warmest night yet.

At some point along the way, Kawapit realized he was being followed by wolves. "At the beginning I was scared, but somehow I realized that I didn't have to be scared anymore," he said. "I believe [the creator] sent those wolves to watch over me."

The 200-kilometre stretch between his home community and Umiujaq took Kawapit about 12 days to walk.

"It got easier as I walked more. But the hardest time I have was as I got close to Umiujaq," he said. "It got foggy and snowy and I have no view, I was probably walking in circles for awhile."

His arrival Feb. 11 in the community of 450 made up for it, he said, as a group of children ran to greet him and walk him into town.

"They were so happy to see me," he said.

Kawapit took the weekend to recover from the first step in his journey. "Someone already invited me for a drink, but I told them no," he said. "I suffered enough just to get here."

Kawapit's plan is to leave Umiujaq Feb. 15 en route to Inukjuak, but this time with some company: four Nunavimmiut walkers who plan to join him, at least for the next stretch.

Kawapit's long-term plan is to walk the entire coast of Nunavik, or at least until the spring comes or "until I run out of snow."

When he eventually returns home, Kawapit isn't sure what to expect; at the very least, he considers it a fresh start.

"But I know it's not gonna happen just like that," he said. "I'll have to get more help."

You can follow his progress on John's Healing Journey Facebook page [here](#).

**Direct Link:**

[http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674cree\\_man\\_embarks\\_on\\_healing\\_journey\\_around\\_nunavik/](http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674cree_man_embarks_on_healing_journey_around_nunavik/)

## **Inuit healing centre will close without new funding**

ELIZABETH PAYNE, OTTAWA CITIZEN

**Published on: February 15, 2016 | Last Updated: February 15, 2016 4:56 PM EST**



**Employees at the Mamisarvik Treatment Centre face an uncertain future.**

An Inuit healing centre that officials believe has played a role in preventing dozens of suicides, will close its doors in March due to lack of funding.

The closure of Mamisarvik Healing Centre, one of only two Inuit-specific treatment centres in the country, comes as the federal Liberal government is talking about a new relationship with Canada's indigenous people. The centre, located in Ottawa's east end, has treated 723 people since opening in 2003.

Jason Leblanc, executive director of Tungasuvvingat Inuit, the not-for-profit Inuit service organization behind the centre, said the program is consistent with the federal government's call for healing and support for families in light of the upcoming inquiry into murdered and missing indigenous women.

"The work we do at Mamisarvik fits that to a T," he said. "We have a model of success and we know how to achieve good outcomes. We have a track record of being a good bet for the government."

The program has had success improving the mental health and wellbeing of participants, said Leblanc. Some have reunited with children and families after taking part in the program, he said. Others have found and retained work. "We have seen people regain their sense of identity," Leblanc said he believes the program has likely helped prevent dozens of suicides among participants.

Suicide rates among Inuit in Nunavut are among the highest in the world. Young Inuit men in Nunavut commit suicide at 40 times the rate of their counterparts in southern Canada, according to one report. Leblanc said three of the 720 people who took part in the Mamisarvik program since it opened — a group that included many with a history of



suicide attempts — went on to commit suicide after taking part in the program. He said that number would have been much higher without the intervention.

One participant said the program helped him with “self care and (my) mental frame of mind. I now have the tools to deal with life’s pressures. ”

The residential program, which offers services in English and Inuktitut, opened with funding from the Aboriginal Health Foundation, created by the Conservative government. The government closed that foundation in 2013, leaving Tungasuvvingat scrambling to keep running.

It managed to do so for a couple of years, said Leblanc, but it can no longer operate without a stable source of funding.

Leblanc said he contacted the Conservative government asking for the funding to continue, without any luck. So far, no new money has come from the Liberal government, but Leblanc he hopes some way to continue the program can be found.

“We hope for a better response from thr current federal government than the past one.”

Eighteen full-time staff and five or six part-time employees are set to lose their jobs when the program shuts down on March 31. Ottawa has a population of about 3,000 Inuit, which makes it bigger than most Inuit communities in the North. It is considered a “gateway” city for travel to and from the north for health care and education, among other things. It is also home to a growing urban Inuit community; many of whom have lived in Ottawa their entire lives.

**Direct Link:** <http://ottawacitizen.com/news/local-news/inuit-healing-centre-will-close-without-new-funding>

## **Nunavut-based addictions facility a long-term goal, says health minister**

**Government currently focusing on supporting people returning from facilities in south**

By Sima Sahar Zerehi, CBC News Posted: Feb 17, 2016 5:00 AM CT Last Updated: Feb 17, 2016 5:00 AM CT

Nunavut's health minister says the government is focusing on providing support for people who return from mental health and addiction treatment facilities in the south, as building a facility in the territory is a longer-term goal.

"Our focus for the time being is to have a strong foundation at the local level so the hard work that they do at the facility is not lost when they return to the same environment," said Paul Okalik.



Paul Okalik, Nunavut's health minister, says the territory is laying the foundation to one day build a mental health and addictions treatment centre for Inuit in the North. (Sima Sahar Zerehi/CBC)

He said the territory is laying the foundation to one day build a treatment centre for Inuit.

"I want it to be in a smaller community where the supports are there, where the culture is very strong, and the language is strong," said Okalik.

He pointed to Clyde River as an ideal example of a small community with strong language and cultural roots where a healing centre based on traditional methods would thrive.

Okalik said the previous treatment centre located in Nunavut was a failure.

"They were down to one client, so it was not sustainable at the time," said Okalik.

"Once we have the foundation in place we'll be sure to open a facility here."

Okalik's statements follow the announcement by Tungasuvvingat Inuit, the organization that runs Ottawa's Mamisarvik Healing Centre, that it will shut down unless it secures \$1 million in annual funding by the end of March.

"I met with the executive in November and my department had committed to providing funds to assist them from January to March of this year," said Okalik.

Okalik said the Government of Nunavut will not be providing any additional funding to keep Mamisarvik open but added that he met with Ontario's Minister of Health to ask for assistance for the Ottawa centre.

"He was very open to providing support, additional support in the future," said Okalik.

In an email to CBC, the Ontario health ministry said it did not fund or use the services provided by the Mamisarvik Healing Centre. It said the ministry had recently met with Tungasuvvingat Inuit and is planning to meet with it again "as part of the development of the Mental Health and Addictions Strategy to hear their advice and recommendations on services for the Inuit population."

Okalik said the GN also has contracts with 11 other facilities in southern Canada that provide services to people in need of substance abuse counselling.

## **Offered expertise**

Jason Leblanc, executive director of Tungasuvvingat Inuit, said his group has offered its help to the Nunavut government as it works toward building a treatment facility.

"We've offered some of our expertise to support that and worked with partners within the government to build capacity and identify where Inuit could access mental health services in their own community," said Leblanc.

Leblanc said with a completion rate of close to 80 per cent for their eight-week treatment program, the program at Mamisarvik has been a success worth emulating.

He said the program includes elements based on traditional Inuit knowledge such as working with elders and an on-the-land component.

Leblanc added that the success of Mamisarvik's models can be seen in testimonies from past participants and the low incidents of suicides in former clients.

"In reviewing the list of past clients to the best of our ability we could only identify three individuals who had subsequent to completing the program gone on to die of suicide," said Leblanc, adding that three people is less than 0.5 per cent of their clients.

"Of course that is three too many, it's a tragedy."

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/nunavut-addictions-treatment-mamisarvik-1.3450458>

## **Remote Quebec community of Kuujjuaq reeling after three teen suicides**

CHRISTOPHER CURTIS, MONTREAL GAZETTE

Published on: February 18, 2016 | Last Updated: February 18, 2016 1:38 PM EST



An Inukshuk overlooks the town of Kuujjuaq in 2002.

When Marie-Hélène Cousineau heard the news, she cried for three days.

She hadn't seen Lukasi Forrest in more than a year, and the two had gradually lost touch since they worked together on a film in 2012. But when she heard that Forrest had taken his own life, it rattled her.

"It was devastating," said Cousineau, a Montreal-based filmmaker. "What can I say? It's something so irreversible, you just think, 'No! You can't change your mind after that.' He was such a sharp kid."

Forrest died on Feb. 2 in Kuujjuaq — a remote Inuit village in Nunavik near the southern rim of Ungava Bay. The 19-year-old's death marked the third suicide in Kuujjuaq over an eight-week period. Locals say the other victims, also teenagers, attended the same high school and moved in the same social circles as Forrest.

Although suicide rates among Quebec's Inuit are as much as 25 times higher than the provincial average, the rapid succession of death in Kuujjuaq has sent shockwaves through the community of roughly 2,500 residents.

News of Forrest's death comes as the Quebec coroner is set to launch a public inquiry into a rash of suicides in two Innu reserves near Sept-Îles.

In neighbouring Nunavut, the coroner's office released a report last September urging the territorial government to declare a state of emergency over the alarming rate of suicide in remote Inuit communities.



**Left to right, Mary Cooper, Lukasi Forrest, and Brent Koneak were all Kuujjuaq residents who took their own lives between December 2015 and February 2016.**

Kuujjuaq's mayor says the latest death is further evidence that immediate action must be taken to fight the youth suicide problem. But, he added, the suicides must be viewed in the context of deeper problems such as housing shortages, rampant poverty and a history of colonial violence.

"This has been a real wake-up call," said Tunu Napartuk. "There are issues we have to deal with as a community, there are issues each family has to deal with together, and as a father I have my own personal responsibility toward my children. I need to make sure they understand that they have support."

People close to Forrest say he fell into a deep depression just before Christmas, when his best friend, Brent Koneak, killed himself. The 18-year-old's death was the first in the recent cluster of suicides and left a deep wound in the community, where nearly 60 per cent of the population is under 30.

The situation worsened a few weeks later, when 16-year-old Mary Cooper took her life. One of her former classmates described her as a smiling and caring person who played sports and excelled at hunting.

## **Overcome with grief**

The two deaths seemed to hit Forrest especially hard. Friends say he and Koneak had been inseparable and that, in the final weeks of his life, Forrest was overcome with grief.

The usually upbeat teen began posting regular Facebook status updates about loss and starting over, often mentioning Koneak by name. On Feb. 1, he wrote "I miss you so much B.K. it's unbelievable." Just a few hours later, Forrest typed his final status update: "Everyday is a new day" next to a cartoon depicting a smiling face.

The next day he was gone.

Just a few years earlier, Forrest starred in the award-nominated film Uvanga and his co-workers on set saw great potential in the young man.

“I met him in Montreal, someone told me ‘There’s this kid who’s very expressive and he’d done some circus (arts) and you should meet him,’ ” said Cousineau, who co-directed Uvanga. “He was perfect for the role. He spoke English and French and understood Inuktitut, he’d lived in the city but he’d been raised up north. You could tell right away he was this super bright guy, a really sharp, witty, funny teenager.”

\*\*\*

After Forrest’s suicide, Napartuk visited the Jaanimmarik high school in hopes of lifting the students’ spirits. Administrators and mental health workers at the school have drafted a list of at-risk students, set aside an area in the building where students can grieve, and providing psychological counselling.

Kuujuaq residents say they aren’t waiting for outside help to tackle the problem. Several townspeople contacted by the Montreal Gazette say they’ve recently completed a locally-sponsored Applied Suicide Intervention Training (ASIST) program to help them identify and help people who are at risk of harming themselves.

“People are pulling together, and there’s actually been a great response to this,” said Napartuk. “In terms of mental-health resources, we actually feel there’s enough available right now. ... Our problems have more to do with basic necessities, like housing.

“A lot of big, three-generation families are packed into three-bedroom houses. They love each other, they try to support each other, but when you don’t have enough space for yourself it can create a very stressful environment for everyone.”

## **Not enough housing**

Overcrowded living conditions are worse among Quebec’s Inuit than any other population group in Canada, according to Makivik Corp. — the legal entity that represents the province’s Inuit. Makivik’s studies suggest about 68 per cent of Quebec’s Nunavik population do not have adequate housing.

While the federal and Nunavik governments are expected to sign a new housing pact this year — one that would address the shortage of nearly 900 units in the region — construction on the new homes likely won’t begin until 2017.

Mental health experts say housing conditions contribute to the prevalence of depression and mental illness in the region. But historic factors also play a role in the high number of suicides in Inuit communities, experts say.

Dr. Gustavo Turecki, who co-wrote an extensive study on suicide in Nunavut, says the federal government’s decision to force the Inuit into settlements during the 1950s created a ripple effect.

“These are communities under a lot of stress,” Dr. Turecki, director of the McGill Group for Suicide Studies, said in an interview last month. “In Nunavut, the community underwent radical changes in a very short period of time. In decades, the whole social

structure changed dramatically, where people went from living on the land to being forced into tiny houses. It's jarring."

While the crisis has badly wounded the people of Kuujuaq, Napartuk believes the town's young population will overcome this latest crisis. To think otherwise, he says, would be to give up on an entire generation.

## **'Proud, resilient people'**

"We're a proud, resilient people and I'm very excited about the future," Napartuk said. "I've just got to make sure we're feeding that potential, that the services and resources we have support these kids. We want these kids to be the lawyers, the doctors, the engineers and carpenters and local leaders of the future."

People in the Nunavik region who are having suicidal thoughts and need help can call the Nunavut Kamatsiaqtut Help Line at 1-800-265-3333 or the Centre de prévention de suicide du Québec at 1-866-APPELLE.

**Direct Link:** <http://montrealgazette.com/news/suicide-in-kuujuaq>

# **Aboriginal History**

## **Trapped in a Human Zoo: Nain man retraces steps of Labrador Inuit in documentary**

**Watching film with family an emotional experience for Johannes Lampe**

CBC News Posted: Feb 12, 2016 10:00 PM NT Last Updated: Feb 12, 2016 10:00 PM NT



Johannes Lampe participated in *Trapped in a Human Zoo*, a new CBC documentary that follows the journey of 8 Labrador Inuit who traveled to Europe in the late 1800s. (CBC)



An Inuit elder is opening up about the emotional experience of participating in a documentary about a group of Labrador Inuit who were shipped off to Europe in the late 1800s to be displayed in a zoo.

Johannes Lampe travelled to Europe with author France Rivet to trace the story of how Abraham Ulrikab and seven other Labrador Inuit ended up as specimens in a human zoo.

The documentary *Trapped in a Human Zoo* aired Thursday on CBC Television's *The Nature of Things*, and Lampe watched the program surrounded by close family and friends at his home in Nain.

The film documents how the Labrador Inuit were given the chance to see Europe in exchange for exhibiting their lifestyle, but when they arrived in France, they were put on display.

Within four months of arriving in Europe, all eight were dead of smallpox.

Lampe said it was a heart wrenching experience to watch the film with his family present.

"I couldn't believe how sad and angry my family could feel," said Lampe.

"I thought I could do all this without being resentful or angry. So I compressed those thoughts and feelings."

"To see it coming from my family, I could see — It is real."

## Based on diary



*Trapped in a Human Zoo* is based in part on journal entries written by Abraham Ulrikab while he was in Europe.

Lampe said he empathized with the journey that Ulrikab went through, and to feel and hear Europe as Ulrikab may have was quite emotional.

"I could feel that while I was trying to connect with the spirits and the emotions, that I did take on those thoughts and those feelings," he said.

One of the most heartbreaking moments of the film comes when Ulrikab, knowing that it's only a matter of time before he too succumbs to smallpox, has to leave his dying three-year-old daughter behind to go back on display in the zoo.

Lampe said hearing how Ulrikab faced this tragedy had an immense effect on his own life, and reminded him of the pain he felt when he lost his own daughter.

"I know that people feel that it is so very hard to journey through life with grief and sadness and sorrow," he said.

"Abraham helped me to go through that, and to know that life goes on, and that we have to live our lives to the fullest."

## **Wants to repatriate remains to Labrador**

While in Europe, Lampe was able to see the skeletons of the Labrador Inuit in a museum in France.

He said keeping remains in a museum is against the Inuit way.

He wants Ulrikab and the seven other Labrador Inuit brought back home where they belong.

"In his diary, he said that he wanted to come back [to Hebron] and so that's where Abraham needs to be brought," said Lampe.

"I believe that family or descendants, and communities or country should do what they can to make that wish come true."

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/human-zoo-labrador-inuit-nature-of-things-1.3446252>

## **Louis Riel Day: Descendent of Métis leader proud to celebrate heritage**

**Great-great-niece to Louis Riel grateful for family history on day honouring ancestor**

CBC News Posted: Feb 15, 2016 8:16 AM CT Last Updated: Feb 15, 2016 10:24 AM CT



Louis Riel led the Red River Resistance in 1869-70. (National Archives of Canada/C-007625)

Many Manitobans embrace family and celebrate one of the province's founding fathers on Louis Riel Day — a new tradition with a deep-rooted meaning for Ginette Abraham, the Métis leader's great-great-niece.

Louis Riel Day was named in 2008 after the man who was once decried as a traitor for his leadership of the 1869-70 Red River Resistance but is now recognized as a founder of the province of Manitoba.

Abraham said her mother, Augustine Abraham, who died last February at 96, told many stories over the years about her great-uncle and taught her daughter to be proud of her Métis heritage.

"It grounds you — like, I know exactly who I am and my place," she said. "Even though people say to me, 'Well, you've got blonde hair?' that doesn't take away the history of my family."

Monday is a day of reflection for Ginette, she said. Her mother's funeral took place on Louis Riel Day last year.

"I will be thinking of my mom for sure and just thinking about how grateful I am for the fact that she taught us to be proud of the people we [are]," she said.

The Red River Resistance was a fight to maintain rights for Métis people.

The Canadian Museum for Human Rights is hosting a day of events to honour Riel on Monday, including beading workshops, a discussion of Métis rights and a series of theatrical and musical performances.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/louis-riel-day-ancestor-proud-of-metis-heritage-1.3448475>

## Aboriginal Identity & Representation

# Seven First Nations to receive 2016 Heritage Award of Merit

SANDOR GYARMATI / DELTA OPTIMIST  
FEBRUARY 12, 2016 12:00 AM



A photo restoration of the Kirkland family by Rick Pelletier, one of the winners of a Delta Friends of Heritage Award this year.

Several First Nations, a group involved with the preservation of a historic house, a Delta man who started a unique Facebook page as well as a local resident who has been painstakingly restoring old photographs are this year's recipients of Delta's heritage awards.

Every February, through its heritage advisory commission, Delta marks Heritage Week (Feb. 15 to 21) by presenting its Heritage Award of Merit and Friends of Heritage Awards.

The commission accepts nominations throughout the year for awards to be presented the following year.

The Heritage Award of Merit is conferred to projects, individuals or groups for their contribution in conserving a valuable part of Delta's history. Awards may be granted to projects in the area of preservation, restoration, rehabilitation or adaptive re-use and may be considered for their exterior or interior characteristics.

At Delta council's regular meeting on Monday, Mayor Lois Jackson will present the 2016 Heritage Award of Merit to seven First Nations - Tsawwassen First Nation, Musqueam First Nation, Katzie First Nation, Kwantlen First Nation,

Tsleil-Waututh Nation, Semiahmoo First Nation and the Kwikwetlem First Nation - that have worked closely with the provincial government to create a "recognition area" at the foot of the Alex Fraser Bridge.

Some of the oldest archaeological finds, representing First Nations activity estimated to be 9,500 years old, have been discovered there.

Friends of Heritage Awards are conferred to a project, individual or group that promotes heritage conservation and awareness in the areas of education, publication or advocacy.

Recipients of a Friends of Heritage Award include the Boundary Bay Park Association, formerly the Cammidge House Committee, for its work promoting heritage through activities at the historic home in Boundary Bay Regional Park.

Rick Pelletier will receive an award for his heritage restorations and installations at buildings at Hawthorne Park, while Gary Cullen will be recognized for promoting interest and awareness of local heritage through his Facebook group called Tsawwassen Old Photos.

The mayor will also announce the recipient of a Heritage Award Scholarship.

- See more at: <http://www.delta-optimist.com/news/seven-first-nations-to-receive-2016-heritage-award-of-merit-1.2171379#sthash.x1yiNmEu.dpuf>

## **Cree RCAF member left suicidal after years of racist abuse in the military**

**'We cannot accept this sort of behaviour' within the Royal Canadian Air Force, commanding officer says**

By Ashley Burke, CBC News Posted: Feb 11, 2016 5:42 PM ET Last Updated: Feb 11, 2016 6:34 PM ET



A Cree member of the Royal Canadian Air Force says he is leaving the military after enduring years of racism that left him feeling ostracized and contemplating suicide.

Master Cpl. Marc Frenette served under "poor, incompetent and often inconsistent leadership" that allowed the alleged harassment to continue for so long, according to a military report obtained by CBC News.

"He was on his hands and knees in the shower crying because he didn't know how he could take anymore," his wife Kristina Paudash-Frenette told CBC News. "It's been heartbreaking. No one deserves this at all."



This report comes at a time when the military is preparing to launch a new diversity strategy in late February to recruit more women, visible minorities and aboriginal members.

The aviation technician, 38, said he joined the military a decade ago to be part of a team. But for the last three years he says he's felt like an outsider. Frenette alleges the racism started when he moved to Petawawa's new helicopter squadron from Moose Jaw in 2013.

Frenette says squadron members at Garrison Petawawa taunted him daily with racial slurs like "kawish," "wagon burner," and hooted offensive "oh-oh-oh" noises as he passed by in the hallway.

While working on a Chinook helicopter in February 2015, an RCAF member allegedly sparked a lighter underneath him and said, "time to burn this Indian before he burns any more wagons."

"That pretty much broke me," Frenette told CBC News. "That's when I thought, what's going to be next."

## **Told to laugh it off**

When he went to his chain of command for help, Frenette says, he was told to laugh it off.

"I felt like it was a battle," Frenette said. "I had to fight almost the chain of command, where I was hoping they would be helping me."

Frenette sent his chief warrant officer a two-page complaint asking to move squadrons over concerns for his safety.



Master Cpl. Marc Frenette was subjected to years of racist abuse while a serving member of the Royal Canadian Air Force. (CBC)

Lt.-Col. Chris McKenna, commanding officer of 450 Tactical Helicopter Squadron, who ordered an internal investigation of Frenette's claims, told CBC News he was outraged by what Frenette endured.

CBC News obtained the final report of that investigation, which revealed that the 25 squadron members interviewed during the probe either withheld information or only told partial accounts of what happened.

"I was furious," McKenna said in an interview with CBC about the allegations. "I was very angry this would have happened in my organization."

The report also revealed significant breakdowns in leadership allowing the alleged harassment to continue without disciplinary action.

"My disappointment not only in the poor behaviour and performance of [the members] ... is only surpassed by the poor, incompetent, and often inconsistent leadership provided" McKenna wrote in the report. "I am appalled at the lack of immediate and swift action."

"We cannot accept this sort of behaviour within the RCAF... as it degrades morale, combat effectiveness, and will ultimately stand in the way of delivering tactical aviation effects on a battlefield of the future."

According to the internal report the leadership involved were talked to about the gravity of not ensuring a harassment-free workplace, compelled to attend a series of professional development sessions. The officer who failed to follow up the initial complaint was issued a recorded warning.





"It's all about making sure that next time this does not occur and not giving up on someone by kicking them out of the military," McKenna said. "These are junior folks who are still learning their role ... I wanted to make sure that they realize what right looks like and they have a very clear picture of that now."

Between 2001 and 2012, there were 290 cases of racism complaints within the Canadian Forces, and 129 of those cases were won by the complainants. The military recorded the numbers to review its human rights and discriminatory conduct policy. Since then, the force says it has not compiled data annually.

However, since 2013 there have been 11 human rights complaints forwarded to the Canadian Forces by the Canadian Human Rights Commission on the grounds of race, colour or religion. Of these 11 cases, eight are continuing, while the others were dropped.

## Promoting diversity in military

Lt.-Gen. Christine Whitecross said one of her three priorities in implementing the upcoming diversity strategy is to increase diversity numbers.

The Canadian Forces still falls far short of reaching the required targets, according to figures provided by the military:

- Women: 15 per cent (goal is 25.1 per cent).
- Visible minorities: 6.5 per cent (goal is 11.8 per cent).
- Aboriginal peoples: 2.5 per cent (goal is 3.4 per cent).

"We want a diverse and respectful organization," said Col. François Bariteau, a spokesman with the Department of National Defence. "One that values differences, one that recognizes differences and can deal with differences."

Concerned the military wasn't doing enough to discipline the alleged offenders in his case, Frenette filed a complaint with the Canadian Human Rights Commission in November, 2015.

The military says it did take action by launching a second, parallel harassment investigation, which is still underway. It involves alternative dispute resolution sessions in which Frenette sits down with a mediator and the eight people alleged to have allegedly harassed him, to confront the realities of racism and how it affected Frenette.

But Frenette says it's not enough.

"I feel the organization should be held accountable for what is done," he said.

Frenette, who is leaving the military at the end of the month, says he contemplated suicide. His marriage, once happy, has suffered, so he's moving with his wife and eight-year-old son to Hiawatha First Nation, a place where they hope to pull their lives back together.

"I feel disheartened and I'm emotionally drained," Frenette said. "I feel like I was abandoned. I was someone they couldn't really wait to get rid of as opposed to someone they wanted to care for.

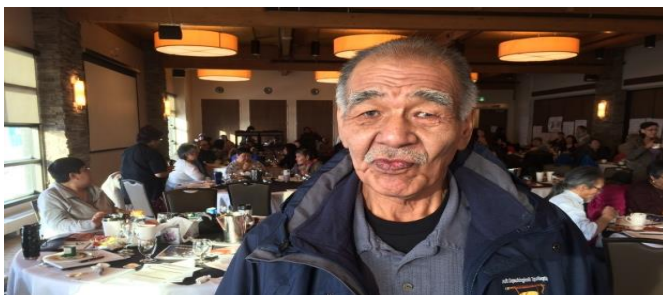
"If I was to meet indigenous youth I'd tell them, 'Don't join the military.'"

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/racist-abuse-canadian-air-force-1.3443197>

## **Inuit translators want to create support network, standardize language**

**'We are people too. We do feel anger, pain and frustration. And depression too,' says one translator**

By Elyse Skura, CBC News Posted: Feb 13, 2016 11:28 AM CT Last Updated: Feb 14, 2016 9:57 AM CT



'The stress is insurmountable,' says Louis Tapardjuk, a board member of Inuit Uqausinginnik Taiguusiliuqtiit, at a conference of interpreters and translators in Iqaluit this week. (Elyse Skura/CBC)

Inuit interpreters and translators made a number of recommendations on the final day of the Inuit language authority's week-long conference, including creating a better support network for those who suffer from 'vicarious trauma.'

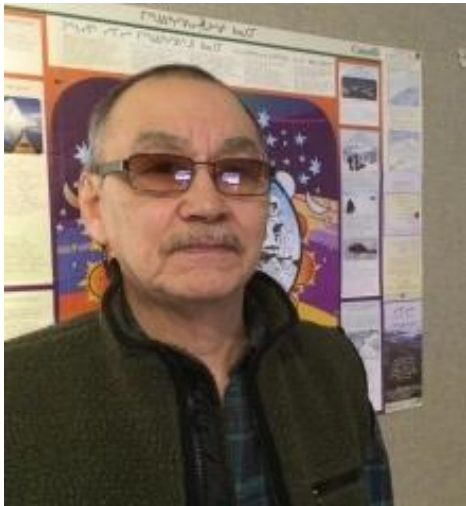
Inuit Uqausinginnik Taiguusiliuqtiit (IUT) hosted 120 delegates who work in Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun for the Apqutauvugut conference in Iqaluit.

"We provide a bridge between the two cultures and it's not an easy task," said Lazarus Arreak, who works in the field. "You really must be committed."

Like many people at the conference, Arreak first began translating for his unilingual relatives, so they could communicate with outsiders who wished to trade goods or simply learn about Inuit culture.

## **Interpreters feel pain, depression**

Since the 1970s, he's translated documents for national organizations, provided simultaneous translations at meetings and worked as a cultural advisor on movie sets.



'A lot of times, at meetings for example, you're treated as robots,' says Lazarus Arreak, an experienced interpreter and translator in Iqaluit, Nunavut. (Elyse Skura/CBC)

"A lot of times, at meetings for example, you're treated as robots," he said.

The stress of always needing to get information correct has taken a toll on him both emotionally and physically, leading him to develop ulcers in his youth.

"In the early years it's hard to tell your body is aching and hurting and traumatized," said Arreak.

"We are people too. We do feel anger, pain and frustration. And depression too."

## **'Insurmountable stress'**

Louis Tapardjuk, an IUT board member and a former territorial MLA and cabinet minister, says it's very important for interpreters and translators to know they are not alone in having these feelings.

"When you're dealing with justice, when you're dealing with health issues, when you're dealing with other very complex and rather difficult situations where the interpreters are expected to interpret it without making any mistakes, the stress is insurmountable," Tapardjuk said.



Interpreters and translators often have to recount traumatizing experiences, including stories of abuse as residential schools. (Jordan Konek/CBC)

In Nunavut, interpreter and translator booths are commonplace at the legislative assembly, the courthouse and public meetings held in community halls across the territory — but their needs are sometimes forgotten.

"We hear things that are extremely difficult, whether it's suicide prevention, whether it's ailments, health, medical," said Jeela Palluq-Cloutier, the executive director of Inuit Uqausinginnik Taiguusiliuqtiit.

"We need a way to let that go. We need a way to take care of ourselves."

## **Need to 'heal our hearts'**

On Friday, interpreters and translators discussed some final recommendations from the conference, which was the first time members of the profession have met in large numbers for well over a decade.

The group supported the idea of meeting more regularly, creating a comprehensive database of terminology, establishing a professional organization and improving support for younger professionals and those suffering from work-related stress.

Peter Irniq, a conference delegate and former Nunavut commissioner, said coming together to discuss these issues was an important step toward healing.



Peter Irniq says interpreters and translators need to be healed and going out on the land is a good place to start. (Jordan Konek/CBC)

"Now people will be thinking about going out on the land and healing out on the land," he said.

"When we hear some horrible stories of people, when we repeat in Inuktitut the horrible stories we are hearing, we have to get out on the land to heal our minds and to heal our hearts — and be with each other."

## Unifying the language

Right now, the Inuit language is written using both syllabics and roman orthography. Palluq-Cloutier made a presentation Tuesday about the Atausiq Inuktitut Titirasiq Task Force, organized through Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, which is exploring the potential to create a unified system.

Tapardjuk says Inuit Uqausiginnik Taiguusiliuqtiit wanted to ensure interpreters and translators are involved in ongoing discussions about standardization, since they work with the written and spoken language on a daily basis.

"There's some [misconception] that we are doing away with syllabics, when in fact we are not," said Tapardjuk.

"We are just trying to consult with the communities, with other organizations. We'll be consulting with different departments as well - the department of education, the department of justice and others."

Irniq reiterated that people should not be afraid about a unified writing system affecting the ways Inuit in different communities use their language.

"I just want to be very clear that syllabics is not going to go away. It's not going to change your local dialect," he said.

Delegates at the conference were supportive of protecting dialects and continuing to be a part of consultations about a unified writing system.



Interpreters and translators who work with Inuit languages are hoping to develop a professional association and resources for those who deal with work-related stress. (Jordan Konek/CBC)

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/inuit-interpreters-translators-need-support-network-1.3447281>

## **Determining aboriginal status complex, historically-rooted: experts**

**By:** Gemma Karstens Smith The Canadian Press Published on Fri Feb 12 2016

VANCOUVER — A young Calgary man says he was recently told he cannot play in the All Native Basketball tournament because he lacks the required aboriginal bloodlines, despite being a member of the Heiltsuk Nation in Bella Bella, B.C. Experts say the process for determining who is aboriginal in Canada is complicated:

### **What is blood quantum**

Canadian rules governing who is aboriginal do not specify that a person must have a specific bloodline. Other countries, such as the United States, have requirements saying a person must have a certain amount of aboriginal ancestry to qualify as aboriginal.

Sometimes people conflate the American system with the Canadian system, says Brian Thom, a professor of anthropology at the University of Victoria.

Blood quantum is a simple label for a complex issue with deep historical roots, says Chris Andersen, interim dean of the University of Alberta's faculty of native studies.

"We use a term like blood quantum like it's this kind of straightforward math, but because of how sexism and patriarchy in the Indian Act work, it isn't straight ahead. It all depends on whether the person's mother or father is a status Indian," he says.

### **In the beginning**

The Indian Act was established in 1876, laying out requirements for who was legally aboriginal in Canada. Under the original act, women did not have any status on their own and instead gained it from their father or husband.

"Women could lose status in all sorts of ways that men couldn't. And one of the major ways that women lost status was through what was called 'marrying out,' " says Andersen.

Aboriginal women who married men who were not status Indians lost their status. But aboriginal men who married women who were not status Indians kept theirs. The wife of the aboriginal man, and any children they had, also became status Indians.

"Over time, what you start to get is these generations of people who don't have status," Andersen says. "And because of the way this has kind of worked intergenerationally, we've come to kind of use a blood quantum logic to make arguments about how much status somebody has."

### **Bill C-31**

Under the Indian Act, tens of thousands of women were stripped of their status when they married non-status men, Andersen says.

The Canadian government sought to address the discrimination by bringing in Bill C-31 in 1985, which allowed the women and their children to apply to have their status restored. The grandchildren of the women who lost status could not apply to gain status.

### **Bill C-3**

Several people argued that the amendments Bill C-31 made to the Indian Act didn't go far enough.

Sharon McIvor launched a court case in 1989, arguing that her grandchildren should have status, too.

British Columbia's Court of Appeal eventually found the amendments in Bill C-31 unconstitutional, and the Canadian government responded by bringing in Bill C-3 in 2011.

Under the new law, McIvor's grandchildren, and the grandchildren of other women who had lost status, could apply for status.

The government estimated about 45,000 people would be entitled to register for status as a result.

### **Today**



The Indian Act still governs who is a status Indian today, but membership in a First Nation is decided separately.

The number of non-status people grows with each generation, and each First Nation makes its own decisions about whether those people are members based on factors that may not include legal status, Andersen says.

A person could have legal status in the eyes of the government, but not be a member of a First Nation, he says.

"(Aboriginal) is a big category," says Thom. "Depending on what criteria you're looking at, you either fall into the federal government's category of who's a status Indian and who's not, or a particular band's category of who's a member and who's not."

**Direct Link:** <http://www.metronews.ca/news/canada/2016/02/12/determining-aboriginal-status-complex-historically-rooted-experts.html>

## **Winnipeg elder receives prestigious Indspire award**

**Mae Louise Campbell is keeper of Winnipeg's Grandmother Moon Lodge**

CBC News Posted: Feb 12, 2016 5:49 PM ET Last Updated: Feb 12, 2016 6:06 PM ET



Elder Mae Louise Campbell is one of two recipients receiving a 2016 Indspire award for culture, heritage and spirituality, presented tonight in Vancouver.

The road to discovering her identity and spirituality wasn't easy, Campbell said.

"I didn't know who I was for many, many years and I had to go in search of my own identity as an aboriginal woman with great difficulty in those years," said Campbell.

Campbell is an elder-in-residence at Red River College in Winnipeg, as well as the keeper of Winnipeg's Grandmother Moon Lodge, which provides spiritual healing services to women in need.

"I'm a great believer in believing that until our women are healed, nothing will happen in our communities, no changes will be made," said Campbell.

"The men have to support that teaching and I know many of the men are saying now, 'The grandmothers need to teach us how to be warriors again.'"

Other Indspire Awards recipients include Carey Price for sports and Joseph Boyden for arts.

The award gala takes place in Vancouver at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre Friday night.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/winnipeg-elder-receives-indspire-award-1.3446729>

## First dictionary of rare Inuit dialect published

Fifty years after anthropologist Jean Briggs lived with the Utkuhiksalingmiut, a nomadic group, linguistic landmark finally sees the light of day.



Anthropologist Jean Briggs, in a photo taken several years ago. When she started writing down words in the Utkuhiksalingmiut dialect, she had no idea it would become the basis for a dictionary.

**By: Katie Daubs** Feature Writer, Published on Sun Feb 14 2016

In August 1963, anthropologist Jean Briggs arrived in a remote Arctic outpost with enough freeze-dried food to make the locals wince at the imagined strain on their dog sled.

Briggs was in her 30s, and wanted to learn the culture and dialect of the Utkuhiksalingmiut, a once-nomadic Inuit people who then lived near Chantrey Inlet, N.W.T. (It's now part of Nunavut.)

“I hated the culture I grew up with. I was just deliriously happy to be there,” says Briggs, 86, who still hates consumerism, doesn’t own a TV and only buys used clothing when a shirt has so many holes that it falls off. Her current nightshirt is from 2000.

She was adopted into the Kigeak family, and marvelled as they speared salmon in the rapids during spring, cut blocks of ice from the inlet in late September to create ice-walled houses, and built igloos when enough snow had fallen further north to make blocks.

Briggs brought dried food — which was actually quite light — because she was allergic to fish, the main staple of the northern diet. (“My allergy specialist in Boston said, ‘Give up anthropology and go home and get married,’ and I told him where to get off,” she recalls.)

But her adoptive father told her she’d be safe to eat the fishtails, and they ate her freeze-dried food for Sunday dinner.

Her adoptive parents taught her words by pointing at things — pot, spoon, cup — and acting out gestures. “What am I doing?” her adoptive father would ask, lying on the floor in the ongoing game of charades.

“‘I don’t know’ — that was my most useful word at first,” she says, laughing. “The short form is *atsu*, rather like a sneeze.”

“They couldn’t communicate well; they couldn’t understand each other,” recalls Salomie Arqviq, who was almost 2 when Briggs became her adopted sister. Arqviq loved to hear the stories about that time: “My father, he was so patient with her. It was kind of upsetting and confusing, but they worked together and they got through it.”

She stayed until 1965 and wrote all the words she was learning on scraps of paper torn from her notepad. Those papers recorded the rare dialect as it was spoken in the 1960s, and form the base of the first dictionary of Utkuhiksalingmiutut, published last year. That was never Briggs’ intention, of course. In 1970, she published *Never in Anger*, her account of life as the adopted daughter in the family. A few years later, a linguist suggested she write a postbase dictionary.

“I said, ‘What’s a postbase?’”

In Inuktitut dialects, words tend to be long, and can act like English sentences. An Inuktitut word has a base and an ending; in the middle, it can be filled with postbases that stretch the word like an accordion, explains University of Toronto linguist Alana Johns. Sometimes they accomplish what intonation might do in another language, and sometimes they stand in for words with abstract meanings — like “always,” “only,” and “can.”

(The *-miut* in Utkuhiksalingmiutut is a postbase meaning “inhabitants of.” The word, translated from right to left, means “the people who live in the place where there is material for making pots.”)

“There are words that seem small but are incredibly important to speak a language in its fullness,” Johns says.

Briggs returned to the communities in the early 1990s to go over the words she had collected with her “chief informant,” adoptive mother Rosie Kigeak.

“Exactly when the book will be published is a prickly subject,” Patricia D’Souza of Nunatsiaq News wrote after meeting Briggs in 2002. “‘Before I die’ is the best answer she can muster.”



As part of the process of writing the dictionary, the co-authors brought two Utkuhiksalingmiutut speakers to Toronto. From left, Joedee Joedee of Baker Lake, the late Sam Itkilik of Baker Lake, and co-authors Jean Briggs, Alana Johns and Conor Cook.

In the early 2000s, Briggs partnered with Johns, who has worked extensively in Inuktitut, and Conor Cook, a former student of Johns. With grant funding, the linguists pored over Briggs’ meticulous notes to analyze the postbases. All three are listed as co-authors of the dictionary.

“You really can’t say anything much in Inuktitut without knowing how the postbases work,” says Cook, who now works for the Inuit language authority in Nunavut.

Cook explains that native speakers aren’t used to analyzing their long words in separate pieces.

*Pataunia’janngitutilluunniit*, for instance, means “even though I don’t think you’re going to have any more boiled fish.” Inuktitut speakers can tell you exactly what the word means, but when you get into “What does the -’ja- part mean?” or “What does the-*luunniit* part mean?” or “Which part of the word means ‘have’?” it gets complicated, Cook says.

Many speakers who worked with Briggs knew exactly what certain parts of the word meant, but some pieces were abstract and difficult to describe. It would be like asking an anglophone to explain “of” or “the,” Cook says. English speakers can use them correctly, but “we kind of do it automatically without being able to articulate the rules,” he says. “And if we’re asked to think about them, they’re rather mind-boggling and hard to pin down.”

Draft of the dictionary in hand, Briggs and Cook returned to Gjoa Haven, Nunavut, one of two communities where Utkuhiksalingmiut had settled in the 1970s.

“They said, so that’s what you were doing 50 years ago,” she says.

Arqviq, who lives in Gjoa Haven, says it “brightened up our day,” when her family heard about the dictionary being published.

“We were hugging one another. All the wonderful memories came back. When we were growing up, we used to really miss her,” she says of Briggs. “She was just like a real biological sister to us ... we would always call her, in Inuktitut, *angijuk* — older sister.”

Nunavut Education Minister Paul Quassa told the legislature the Utkuhiksalingmiut feared their dialect was being lost or changed as they settled in other communities.

Briggs, who lives in Maddox Cove, N.L., sent a copy of the dictionary to the town council of Gjoa Haven, but says it wouldn’t really be interesting to locals.

“It’s for people who are learning Inuktitut or fluent speakers who have some sort of linguistic special interest,” she says. “It’s the bones. If you’re not an archeologist, why would you be interested in a box of bones?”

“This is really only half the dictionary,” says Cook, who hopes they can also complete a more standard dictionary of Utkuhiksalingmiutut words.

That type of dictionary is more likely to interest locals. But Briggs says there are several obstacles, and adds, “I’ll never live long enough to do that.”

When asked if she felt some relief that the postbase dictionary was published, Briggs responds with characteristic frankness. She didn’t feel a deep emotional connection to this book, although she believes it is the best postbase dictionary ever published.

“It’s just done,” she says. “You eat your supper, you wash your dishes and then it’s done.”

### **Know your postbase**

**1. *hilaluktuq*** — “It’s raining.” *hilaluumařuq* — “There is sort of a long rainy spell.”

Postbase: *ma* or *uma*. In this context, the *ma* means that something is happening for a long time.

The authors would go through the database of words looking for *ma* in other words.

“Then it would be a matter of going through those words and trying to make a generalization about what the *ma* is doing,” Conor Cook says.

**2. *niri*** — “to eat.” *nirimařut* — “They are devouring something.” (in the context of a whole bunch of seagulls pecking at a piece of meat).

In this case, *ma* is not about the action taking a long time, but the many seagulls taking part. “So we were gradually moving toward the idea that *ma* somehow extends the action in some way,” Cook says.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.thestar.com/news/insight/2016/02/14/first-dictionary-of-rare-inuit-dialect-published.html>

## **First Nations youth less welcome than refugees in Thunder Bay, Ont., MP says**

**Patty Hajdu says racism against indigenous youth in Thunder Bay is 'appalling'**

By Jody Porter, CBC News Posted: Feb 17, 2016 7:00 AM ET Last Updated: Feb 17, 2016 2:18 PM ET



Thunder Bay MP Patty Hajdu says the way indigenous youth are treated in the city is shameful. (Sean Kilpatrick/Canadian Press)

First Nations arriving in Thunder Bay, Ont., to attend school are made to feel less welcome than refugees or other minorities moving to the northern Ontario city, according to a local MP.

Patty Hajdu was reacting on Tuesday to a CBC News report comparing the warm welcome received by a family of Syrian refugees to the reports of racism experienced by First Nations youth.

"It's appalling, it's ashaming for my community, but for our country as well, that indigenous young people who come to Thunder Bay to study are subjected to racism that includes things like people flinging things out of cars at them or demeaning hate speech that they face," Hajdu said.

An inquest currently underway into the deaths of seven First Nations students in Thunder Bay has heard testimony from several youth who said they had eggs and racist taunts thrown at them from passing cars in the city.

People of colour who have moved to Thunder Bay from other Canadian cities tell Hajdu that racism is different in northern Ontario, she said.

"There's a certain level of animosity towards indigenous people that's the result of the colonization, the lack of education in our school systems," Hajdu said.



Ontario Regional Chief Isadore Day says the arrival of Syrian refugees could spark a conversation about the needs of First Nations people who also move to cities in search of a better life. (CBC)

Ontario Regional Chief Isadore Day said the arrival of Syrian refugees could be an opportunity to start a conversation about the needs of all people who are new to urban life in Canada.

"I have to ask myself, what is the difference between those refugees and First Nations leaving their communities to find much better living and quality of life?" Day said.

Immigrants and First Nations youth in Thunder Bay have many things in common, including the need to adapt to unfamiliar language, food and climate, according to Moffat Makudo.

He immigrated to Canada from Africa and began working with young people from remote reserves after he identified a lack of services for them.

"Here we have the multicultural associations welcoming immigrants and refugees, but I saw nothing welcoming aboriginal students," Makudo said.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/first-nations-youth-less-welcome-than-refugees-in-thunder-bay-ont-mp-says-1.3450528>

## **Controversy expected as Inuit experts meet to unify 9 different writing forms**

There are only 60,000 Inuit in Canada, but they are divided between nine different writing forms and at least that many dialects.





An Inuit hunter coils the rope of a subsistence net after pulling in a beluga whale. There are only 60,000 Inuit in Canada, but they are divided between nine different writing forms and at least that many dialects. On Friday, language experts are to meet in Ottawa to help bridge that gulf.

**By:** Bob Weber The Canadian Press, Published on Wed Feb 17 2016

Two Inuit go hunting. One hands the other his rifle and the recipient says “ma’na.”

His partner, though, has no idea what he’s just heard. The word for thanks in his dialect is “qujannamiik.”

There are only 60,000 Inuit in Canada, but they are divided between nine different writing forms and at least that many dialects. On Friday, language experts are to meet in Ottawa to help bridge that gulf.

“People can generally understand each other, but there are serious limitations for that understanding,” said Natan Obed, head of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, Canada’s national Inuit group.

“If we had one unified writing system, we could maximize the ability for us to read in our language and also educate our children and provide them with learning resources.”

Inuktitut fractured because it was spoken by widely dispersed groups who rarely interacted. The language splintered further when missionaries developed writing for it.

Syllabics, originally based on characters from Pitman shorthand, are most common in the Eastern Arctic. Roman orthography, the letters of the alphabet most of us recognize, is mostly used in the west.

The dialects have diverged so widely that some use sounds that speakers from other parts of the North can’t even pronounce. Obed’s group produces a magazine called Inuktitut that native speakers in the far west and the far east just can’t read.

The drive to establish a standard writing form dates back to a recommendation in a 2011 report on Inuit education. Last September, experts from the four major Inuit regions began that task and continue their work on Friday.

Controversy is expected.

Many argue orthography is the way to go. It's in common use everywhere — especially on social media and the Internet, both widely used by Inuit.

Last week, Inuktitut interpreters and translators voted at a conference in Iqaluit in favour of moving to orthography.

But many don't want to say goodbye to the triangles, circles and squiggles of syllabics. The debate gets more heated because the areas where Inuktitut is strongest — almost all Quebec Inuit say they're fluent — are the same areas that use syllabics.

“There are more Inuit talking seriously about transitioning out of syllabics into orthography,” Obed said. “(But) it is very contentious because it gets to the heart of who people are and how they've learned and express themselves.

“People have equated linguistic preservation and use to syllabics,” Obed said. “Syllabics attachment is based on the overarching history and the fact that syllabics allowed people to retain their language and their culture at a time of colonization and great upheaval.”

There is no central language authority across all four Inuit regions. Implementing any recommendations from the standardization report will be up to the regional land-claim groups.

Coming together would have economic and cultural benefits, said Obed. It would draw Inuit together and make developing curriculum materials for schools easier and cheaper.

“The Roman orthography side says, ‘Look at the practicality of what orthography could do to unlock the learning potential, to reduce costs, to ensure in this digital age that we don't have to get through another set of barriers to express ourselves.’”

The experts meeting this weekend have until early next year to complete their work.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2016/02/17/inuit-experts-to-meet-in-ottawa-to-unify-9-different-writing-forms.html>

## Aboriginal Politics

### **Agreements signed between Katzie First Nation and Pitt Meadows called 'historic'**



Katzie First Nation Chief Susan Miller

*posted Feb 11, 2016 at 3:00 PM*

In what is being deemed the start of a new shared history, Katzie First Nation and the City of Pitt Meadows created three historic agreements recently, at the new Katzie Health Centre.

The agreements – which focus on communications protocols and the provision of water, sewer, and fire protection services – are the result of a working process between the two councils and senior staff during the past 18 months.

The City of Pitt Meadows and Katzie First Nation started the journey with the intention of replacing long expired service agreements.

In 2014, both communities applied to take part in the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) First Nations - Municipal Community Infrastructure Partnership Program (CIPP). Pitt Meadows and Katzie were one of only six municipal/First Nation pairs selected for participation out of 50 applicants.

Through this journey the communities not only carefully crafted the new service agreements, but also strengthened their relationship and formed a friendship.

According to FCM, relationships between First Nations and municipalities are often marked by tension and mistrust.

As a result, communities lose opportunities to share scarce resources, reduce costs, and generate positive social and economic outcomes. FCM initiated CIPP to respond to interest from municipalities and Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) to improve community infrastructure and build new partnerships with First Nations.

The CIPP improves the ability of neighbouring First Nations and municipal governments to partner and improve community infrastructure. The program has received a Deloitte Public Sector Leadership Award from the Institute of Public Administration (IPAC) for this creative approach.

“As Mayor, one of my utmost priorities is to bring Katzie First Nation back into mainstream consciousness in our community so that the richness of its culture can be

embraced and celebrated by the entire community," said Pitt Meadows Mayor John Becker in a testimonial on the CIPP program website.

"Engaging in the CIPP provided Katzie First Nation with the opportunity to showcase our culture to the surrounding community, and to develop, as equal partners, the vision of creating sustainable communities, through friendship, community spirit, culture and economic development," said Katzie Chief Susan Miller.

Both partners noted at the signing that they have come a long way in better understanding each other.

"We entered the room as neighbors and left as friends," said Becker.

Katzie and the City of Pitt Meadows have recently been recognized both provincially and federally for their working relationship.

Chief Miller and Becker are currently in Ottawa sharing their perspectives and experiences at the annual Federation of Canadian Municipalities Sustainable Communities conference and intend to meet with representatives of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada to share their story as well.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.mrtimes.com/news/368540841.html>

## **ITK president calls for more Inuit-specific funding in pre-budget hearings**

**'Time and time again we as Inuit find ourselves left out,' says Natan Obed**

By Elyse Skura, [CBC News](#) Posted: Feb 17, 2016 6:52 AM CT Last Updated: Feb 17, 2016 6:52 AM CT



Natan Obed, president of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, had a list of recommendations for the federal finance committee in Ottawa during a presentation at Tuesday's pre-budget consultation hearings. (CBC)

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami president Natan Obed called for more Inuit-specific funding, particularly for northern infrastructure, when he spoke at the first day of consultation hearings ahead of the federal budget.

Members of Parliament on the federal finance committee heard from a dozen witnesses on Tuesday, including economic experts and various indigenous leaders.

"Time and time again we as Inuit find ourselves left out or only partially covered or covered in a way that does not reflect the realities that we live in," said Obed.

The Inuit leader said the federal government needs to be more careful about its wording, since it is often not clear whether Inuit or Northern communities are "inside or outside" broader funding envelopes.

"First Nations is used sometimes instead of indigenous, or indigenous is used when it only means certain indigenous peoples in Canada."

Obed pointed to an example from the prime minister's throne speech, when Trudeau spoke about making a "more effective" **First Nations education** system.

## Infrastructure needs at forefront

When it came time to point to specific funding needs, Obed listed a number of ways Inuit communities are lacking in terms of infrastructure.

"We still don't have ports in many of our communities even though all but two of our communities are marine communities," he said.

Earlier this year, the Nunavut government announced **Iqaluit's port project** was on track to be completed by 2020, but the community of Pond Inlet says it is still waiting for confirmation that a **small craft harbour** that was promised during the federal election will go ahead.

Obed also renewed calls for all 52 Inuit communities to have **telecommunications infrastructure** on par with the rest of Canada and for more modern methods of generating energy.

"We still have diesel generation that powers all of our communities in an age when we're looking to better and cleaner energy alternatives," said Obed.

"This is completely unacceptable."

## Fulfilling promises

Investing in the North will help build Canada and improve the country's position in terms of sovereignty issues, the leader argued.

"We need large investments in ensuring that we do not live in overcrowding conditions that we are currently under now, where over half of our people now live in overcrowded social housing conditions."

The **prime minister has already pledged** to implement the 94 recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, starting with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and launch an inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women.

Now, Obed says the government will need the proper funding to fulfil those promises.

"We will expect that the budget will include funding to implement those three very large, very comprehensive and very much needed different scopes of work that will be reflective of Inuit as well as the other indigenous Canadians in a way that is respectful and comprehensive."

## **Funding for aboriginal groups**

Obed finished off his statements with an impassioned plea for the government to increase funding for aboriginal organizations.

Over the last 10 years, he says Inuit groups have taken "huge hits," which have made it difficult for some organizations to function.

"This war on our people and the way in which we try to help one another represent ourselves to Canada and the world needs to end," he said.

"We need funding to be able to ensure that we can provide services at the community level and the regional level and that we can represent ourselves at the national and international levels."

The pre-budget consultation hearings will run for the rest of the week, with a federal budget expected next month.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/inuit-tapiriit-kanatami-pre-budget-consultations-1.3450856>

## **Qikiqtani Inuit Association to talk budget, mining at board meeting**

## Support for hunters and Inuit training programs will also be discussed, says QIA president

By Elyse Skura, [CBC News](#) Posted: Feb 17, 2016 10:50 AM CT Last Updated: Feb 17, 2016 10:51 AM CT



PJ Akeeagok, the president of the Qikiqtani Inuit Association, is encouraging beneficiaries to turn out to this week's public Board of Directors meeting. (CBC)

When the Qikiqtani Inuit Association opens its board meeting to the public this afternoon, president PJ Akeeagok says there will be some important topics up for discussion — including support for hunters and Inuit training programs.

Akeeagok will give an update on his recent community consultations but he says the "main topic" will be the budget.

"The budget is what runs QIA in terms of where we're going to go and put our resources."

Since being elected, Akeeagok has been clear that he wants input from local Inuit for his mandate and he has held open houses in many of the region's communities since he took over as president.

"It's been amazing," he said of his recent trips. "It's definitely humbling. We've met close to 1,000 Inuit in the last year and that's just through the open houses."

## Mining, training on the agenda

Last year, QIA visited several communities to consult with Inuit about **Baffinland's phase 2 proposal**, a controversial plan to ship iron ore out of Milne Inlet 10 months per year.

Akeeagok says that issue will be brought up again at this meeting, as well as another perennial topic of discussion: jobs.

"I think training's always been a very high priority that's been given in terms of the opportunities it comes with."



The issue is already being addressed, according to Akeeagok, and the Makigiaqta Inuit Training Corporation had its inaugural meeting this month.

He also says QIA is making progress to ensure support for hunters.

"I think there's tangible things to look forward to in the coming year."

The meetings begin at 1:30 p.m. Wednesday and 9:00 a.m. Thursday at Iqaluit's Frobisher Inn.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/qikiqtani-inuit-association-board-meeting-1.3451620>

## **Drummers, dancers welcome B.C.'s 1st female aboriginal MLA to legislature**

By [The Canadian Press](#)

February 17, 2016 - 2:06pm



VICTORIA — Drummers and dancers welcomed British Columbia's first aboriginal woman elected to the legislature in an emotional ceremony that saw Melanie Mark wiping away tears.

Mark is one of two New Democrats who won byelections earlier this month.

Jodie Wickens was elected in the suburban Vancouver riding of Coquitlam-Burke Mountain and Mark was elected in Vancouver-Mount Pleasant.

Mark wore her grandmother's traditional red and black button blanket to the ceremony that included welcoming songs from the Nisga'a Nation from B.C.'s northwest.

B.C. has previously elected two male aboriginal members, Frank Calder and Larry Guno, while current Victoria New Democrat Carole James and former Liberal Marc Dalton are Metis.

Legislature Clerk Craig James says the addition of Mark and Wickens increases B.C.'s female representation in legislature to 38 per cent, the highest in Canada.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cfjctoday.com/article/513136/drummers-dancers-welcome-bc-s-1st-female-aboriginal-mla-legislature>

## Aboriginal Sports

### Aboriginal basketball player, not aboriginal enough?



**Aboriginal basketball player, not aboriginal enough?-Image1**

The Canadian Press, 2016

*Josiah Wilson, 20, left, is shown in this handout image with his brother and sisters at a Calgary restaurant in September 2015. Wilson was adopted as a baby from Haiti by a family in Canada. THE CANADIAN PRESS/HO*

Feb 12, 2016

VANCOUVER — Tattooed on Josiah Wilson's chest is a fine line of writing that combines two significant dates: his birth and the death of his biological mother four days after he was born.

The 20-year-old, who was adopted as a baby from Haiti, also carries a status Indian card. He is African by race — but legally, culturally and ethnically he identifies as a member of the Heiltsuk First Nation.

The mix is not common, but Wilson says he's "never really had a problem with it" until earlier this week, when he was expelled from a popular First Nations basketball competition in northern British Columbia.

His father says the tournament committee claims he lacks sufficient aboriginal bloodlines to participate in the All Native Basketball Tournament.

Tournament organizers could not be reached for comment.

It's a decision that has not only upset Wilson, his family and community, but has raised questions about what parameters are used to define identity and membership in a group.

"There's no shame in having multiple identities," said Don Wilson, Josiah's father, a Calgary-based doctor born to an aboriginal father and Caucasian mother, who was raised in Bella Bella, B.C.

He said his son is proud of his fusion as Haitian, Heiltsuk, his adoptee status and birth ancestry.

"Josiah's never thought anything of it — being black and having a First Nations grandfather, a mixed-race father and a white grandmother. He's got a rainbow family," he said. "It wasn't a strange thing for us. It seems that other people from the outside find it unusual."

Josiah Wilson, who said he's never really had to think about these issues before, agreed: "That's been pretty cool, having all these multiple identities."

But he's surprised by the sudden spotlight thrown on who he is and how it relates to the decision made by the tournament organizers.

"I told my Grade 10 and 11 class I had native status. They were like, 'OK, cool.' It wasn't a big deal," he said. "And then this happens and everybody is like 'Oh my god,' and it goes viral."

Wilson was apparently excluded on the basis of race, a controversial choice over ethnicity, said associate professor Wendy Roth of the sociology department at the University of British Columbia.

Race tends to be defined by biology or physical characteristics, while ethnicity relates to how someone is raised and their cultural upbringing, she said, adding that they often go hand-in-hand.

But that's not the case for Wilson — who is racially African and ethnically First Nations — and the committee may have conflated the two in interpreting the rules, Roth suggested.

"There's no reason to apply a racial standard, rather than an ethnic one."

Wilson's family is currently considering lodging a human rights complaint, and records show there is basis for them to proceed.

Section 8 of the Human Rights Code of B.C. states a person cannot be denied accommodation in a service or facility based on criteria including race, colour, ancestry or place of origin.

The provincial Human Rights Tribunal has released several decisions that have found the potential for discrimination based on the "core of Indianness," which it says involves matters integral to aboriginal culture or Indian status.

Complaints related to Indian status fall under federal jurisdiction, meaning if the Wilsons follow through on plans to file a complaint, it could be referred to the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal.

Wilson said he played for a junior aboriginal team for two years and was about to enter his third All Native Basketball Tournament with an intermediate men's team this week before he was told he could no longer play.

Roth said in the complex web of issues surrounding identity, she has a hunch he may have been sidelined for another reason.

An "inappropriate assumption" might have been made that Wilson has an unfair advantage as a basketball player, based on the disproportionate number of African-Americans who play professionally in the United States, she said.

"My guess is somebody wants to exclude him because he's good. And it has absolutely nothing to do with how he was raised or his ethnicity," she said. "Some team wants to press their advantage."

The possibility makes Wilson, who says he's skilled at his sport, chuckle.

"A lot of my friends and a lot of people who have been messaging me on Facebook are saying that — 'I'm better because I'm black,' " he said. "That's very funny."

**Direct Link:** <http://www.yorkregion.com/news-story/6306493-aboriginal-basketball-player-not-aboriginal-enough-/>

## **Energy, the Environment & Natural Resources**

### **Future polar bear lobbying must include Inuit, Nunavut org says**

**"When people stop trade of any kind... that's the only source of income for a lot of families"**

LISA GREGOIRE, February 12, 2016 - 8:30 am



Paul Irngaut, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.'s director of wildlife and environment, said during a wildlife lobbying trip to Washington this week, he tried to put a human face on the Nunavummiut who will be impacted by international polar bear harvesting restrictions. But he's not hopeful the U.S. will back away from trying to increase protection for polar bears and prevent their trade. (PHOTO COURTESY PAUL IRNGAUT)

Environment Canada and Climate Change officials are hoping to create a negotiating team to dissuade the United States Fish and Wildlife Service from insisting on further protection for polar bears and Inuit leaders want to be at the table.

Paul Irngaut, director of wildlife and environment for Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., said Feb. 11 that this could be a test of the new federal government's commitment to building new relationships with Canada's Indigenous peoples.

"We want to ensure that Inuit are at the table," Irngaut said.

"They need to be at the table, organizations like Makivik and NTI — especially NTI because Nunavut holds the most polar bears of all the regions and we will be the most affected."

Irngaut was one of several Canadian delegates on Capitol Hill in Washington this week lobbying American officials to back away from their plan to have polar bears uplisted to an Appendix 1 classification under CITES — the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species.

The U.S. has tried twice to have this done and failed both times and it's expected the U.S. will try again when the next world wildlife conference of CITES signatories meets in South Africa in September.

Irngaut insisted that any lobbying efforts on Canada's part must include Inuit delegates to present the Inuit perspective.

An Appendix 1 listing would mean an automatic ban on all international trade of polar bear parts.

Polar bears are already listed as a "threatened" species in Alaska, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) website.

The U.S. FWS defines “threatened” as “an animal or plant species likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range.”

This is different from species such as the blue whale and sea lion which are listed as “endangered” in Alaska, or “an animal or plant species in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range.”

Extinction is a word that Irngaut hears a lot.

While some officials in Washington believe that Canada is doing a decent job managing its polar bear populations, they believe that because of climate change polar bears could still face serious decline in 20 or 30 years.

For that reason, Irngaut said, some American officials are pushing to protect the species now, believing the population will be larger, healthier, and more able to withstand the dramatic impact a warming climate is expected to have on polar bear sea ice hunting environments.

But many Inuit believe that polar bears in the Arctic — certainly some sub-populations at least — are already healthy, so healthy in fact that their high numbers pose a danger to Arviat and other western Hudson Bay communities, Irngaut said.

The Nunavut government recently increased the polar bear harvesting quota for the western Hudson Bay subpopulation by four animals, from 24 to 28.

Arviat South MLA Joe Savikataaq criticized Environment Minister Johnny Mike for that paltry increase, pointing out that the NWMB had recommended the new harvesting quota be increased to 38.

“We tried to emphasize that we have a really strong management system in place in Nunavut,” Irngaut said.

“It’s robust and it can deal with climate change and other factors. Let’s improve the system we already have through the [Nunavut Wildlife Management Board].”

But polar bears have been a political icon for a while, he said, and he’s not hopeful that U.S. wildlife lobbyists will give up their quest to protect polar bears.

Irngaut said Inuit delegates tried to cut through that rhetoric by “putting a human face” on the people who will be affected if wildlife harvesting trade is restricted.

“When we go home, you and me, we open the fridge and there’s food there. But for a lot of families in Nunavut, they don’t have any food in the fridge. When people stop trade of any kind, not only polar bear but seals or what-have-you, that’s the only source of income for a lot of families,” he said.

“And when they talk about uplisting, and they stop trade, they effect a lot of families. We were trying to portray that in our meetings. But I think they’re minds are set based on predictions of what will happen.”

**Direct Link:**

[http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674future\\_polar\\_bear\\_lobbying\\_must\\_include\\_inuit\\_nunavut\\_org\\_says/](http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674future_polar_bear_lobbying_must_include_inuit_nunavut_org_says/)

## **Carr promises First Nations collaboration on energy development**

LAURA KANE, THE CANADIAN PRESS 02.09.2016



**Natural Resources Minister Jim Carr addresses the Assembly of First Nations in Vancouver, B.C., Wednesday, Feb. 10, 2016. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Jonathan Hayward**

VANCOUVER — Canada's natural resources minister is promising a new relationship with First Nations on energy development and indigenous leaders are expressing cautious optimism about the new Liberal government's tone.

Jim Carr told a forum organized by the Assembly of First Nations on Wednesday that Aboriginal Peoples will be consulted meaningfully on resource projects and decisions will be based on science.

"We've opened the door for a new way of doing things, and I want to invite you in," he told the crowd. "I'm asking you to seize this opportunity, to change the language on resource development, to strive for consensus."

The forum in Vancouver is bringing together First Nations from across the country to set priorities for working with the energy industry. The visit marked Carr's first official trip to British Columbia, where he met with provincial cabinet ministers.

Carr said the government wants to collaborate with indigenous communities to develop natural resources based on a low-carbon, sustainable energy economy.



He highlighted the government's introduction of interim environmental assessment rules for major resource projects, including Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain pipeline expansion and TransCanada's Energy East project.

The changes mean the government will do additional indigenous consultation on Trans Mountain after Ottawa receives a recommendation from the National Energy Board in May.

The projects are also to be assessed on greenhouse gas emissions produced in oil extraction and processing.

Carr said he plans to increase indigenous representation on the National Energy Board and look at best practices from around the world as environmental assessment is overhauled.

"We know that there will be no projects approved in Canada under the current regulatory scheme," he told reporters after the speech.

Carr said the record of pipeline infrastructure development since 2011 has not been a "particularly happy one," despite supportive governments in Alberta and Ottawa and \$100-a-barrel oil during that period.

"They didn't proceed because they couldn't carry the confidence of Canadians, and part of the reason was because indigenous people were not meaningfully consulted," he said.

"They have to be. They will be."

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip of the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs said he welcomes public statements that indicate the good intentions of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's government.

"However, at the end of the day, it's not so much what governments say, it's what they do," he said. "We've already seen evidence of where the Trudeau government has taken a shortcut with some cosmetic changes to the National Energy Board review process."

Additional consultation on Trans Mountain won't make a difference because the project has already been examined under a "broken" process, Phillip suggested.

Ontario Regional Chief Isadore Day said he's sold on the Liberal government's message, but he expects it to turn into action.

"I'm skeptical of just talk, so, shortly after this, there's going to have to be a very clear reciprocation of those commitments from the prime minister directly."

**Direct Link:**

<http://www.montrealgazette.com/business/energy/carr+promises+first+nations+collaboration+energy/11710792/story.html>

## Pipeline projects need 'indigenous licence', says AFN National Chief



Assembly of First Nations national Chief Perry Bellegarde holds a news conference in Ottawa on Monday, June 1, 2015. (Photo: CP/Sean Kilpatrick) (The Canadian Press)

Saturday February 13, 2016

Some pipeline projects should be allowed to proceed if they have an "indigenous licence" according to the National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations.

"We need to make sure that there is, I call this the indigenous licence, not just social but indigenous licence," Perry Bellegarde told Chris Hall on CBC Radio's *The House*.

The AFN hosted its First Nations Forum on Energy this week in Vancouver to allow First Nations leaders, politicians, environmentalists and key industry players to talk about how to develop some of the country's natural resources

Perry Bellegarde's language about major energy projects now almost mirrors that of the prime minister. "Yes, we have to look at ways to get things to the international markets, in a meaningful, substantive way," he said.

Last month, Justin Trudeau told the House of Commons: "We are working very, very hard right across the country with municipal leaders, with provincial leaders, to make sure we're creating the social licence, the oversight, the environmental responsibility and the partnership with communities to get our resources to market in a responsible way."

"We have to find that balance between the economy and the environment. That's what it's all about," Bellegarde said.

### Ottawa's role

The federal government has been clear: proper consultations will be a necessary element of energy projects.

"If we're going to attract the investments we need to sustainably develop our energy resources, then we have to better engage Canadians, conduct deeper consultations with indigenous peoples and base decisions on science, facts and evidence," Natural Minister Jim Carr said last month as he was unveiling a [new environmental assessment process for energy projects](#).

Now Bellegarde wants to see that translated into reality. "Great to hear the words, but we have to see some action," he said.

One way to do that, he suggested, would be to include First Nations in the review process, including the National Energy Board.

"Expand the Energy Board! I always say if they are full, well, expand it to include indigenous people."

### **Budget must include "billions" for First Nations**

The Liberals [made several key commitments](#) to First Nations during the election campaign.

Despite concerns about the state of the economy and the prime minister suggesting that the deficit in their upcoming budget [could be bigger than promised](#), the National Chief of the AFN says he needs to see the government follow through on its promises.

"What we expect is billions of dollars in investment," he said.

Bellegarde argued there's a small window of opportunity to get things done in order to close the gap between First Nations and the rest of the country.

"We basically have to influence the first two budgeting cycles because they go into a political process in the third and fourth ones," he said.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/radio/thehouse/tom-mulcair-takes-responsibility-for-ndp-s-extremely-cautious-campaign-1.3443873/pipeline-projects-need-indigenous-licence-says-afn-national-chief-1.3443901>

## **Terrace, B.C. First Nations back gov't Pacific Northwest LNG review**

by Josh Massey - Terrace Standard  
posted Feb 15, 2016 at 8:00 AM

Two local First Nations say they are tentatively onboard with conclusions of a federal environmental review of the Pacific Northwest LNG terminal planned for Lelu Island

which concluded that salmon would not be affected by the footprint of the \$11-billion liquefaction facility at the mouth of the Skeena River.

“We have gone to great lengths to address environmental concerns and have ensured that an extraordinary amount of scientific work has taken place,” said Kitsumkalum chief Don Roberts in a press release following last week’s release of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (CEAA) review.

“As we review CEAA’s findings and have the assurance that the project will not impact the Skeena fishery, it enables us to consider social and economic benefits for our members, like training for our younger generation,” said Roberts.

Kitselas chief councillor Joe Bevan also endorsed the finds of the federal agency.

“All of our leaders and people have been weighing the benefits against the potential impacts through multiple public meetings. We are encouraged that the proponent has undertaken significant additional work to address concerns and that the independent scientists at CEAA have validated this work.”



Their comments were contained within a release from the Tsimshian Environmental Stewardship Authority made up of five Tsimshian first nations and formed to review the Pacific NorthWest LNG project.

The five are among seven Tsimshian first nations having traditional claims to the area for fish and other marine harvesting around Lelu Island.

One of the nations that is part of this authority, the Gitga’at First Nation, did not participate in the endorsement of the federal environmental review.

The Kitselas have already signed an impact management benefits agreement for the project and Kitsumkalum is also in negotiations.

The federal review was delayed while Pacific NorthWest LNG provided the government with more detailed information about how the development, including a kilometre long trellis into Chatham Sound, would affect the ocean floor where a sensitive ecosystem provides rearing grounds for juvenile salmon.

Petronas, the Malaysian state-owned company wanting to build the facility changed its design to elongate the pier going out into the bay to try to avoid this area.

### **Joe Bevan**

The review said there would be significant impacts on the porpoise population in the area, as well as a concerning increase in greenhouse gas emissions.

Local conservation groups were unanimous in disagreeing with the claim that salmon would not be affected, basing their statements off other scientific studies that have been done in the area.

The project is being opposed by the elected and hereditary leadership of another Tsimshian first nation, the Lax Kw'alaams, which have a traditional claim to Lelu Island itself and to the surrounding marine waters.

With the CEAA review now released, a 30-day public comment period of the review is now underway. That ends March 11.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.terracestandard.com/news/368739541.html>

## **First Nations, environmental groups appealing Alton gas project approval**

By Rebecca LauReporter/Weekend Anchor Global News, February 18, 2016 1:51 pm



Local organizations and First Nation bands hold a press conference to voice their opposition to the Alton gas project on Feb. 18, 2016.

Members of First Nations, environmental and community groups have filed at least half a dozen appeals to Nova Scotia's environment minister challenging the province's decision to approve the Alton gas project near Stewiacke.

Neighbouring First Nation bands says they were never properly consulted and the project impacts treaty rights.

“It’s a case of a little too late for consultation when the project is virtually 95, 97 per cent complete. How meaningful is that? How much dialogue can you have?” Jim Michael, the band solicitor for Sipekne’katik First Nation, said.

The project was already put on hold in 2014 after Mi’kmaq protesters said the AltaGas Ltd. had failed to consult them. Last month, the province approved the application.

It allows the company to use water from the Shubenacadie estuary to flush out underground salt caverns. The wastewater will be pumped back into the river and the empty caverns will be used to store natural gas.

“The community and the residents have voiced numerous concerns when the proponent was not able to answer the questions properly or effectively during those meetings,” Millbrook First Nation Chief Bob Gloade said.

“That’s not proper engagement, that’s not proper consultation. That’s a one-way dialogue, so they just basically sat there, listened to the concerns and left.”

Environmental groups that filed appeals say there are concerns about the impact to fish habitat and questions about the validity of scientific studies that were conducted to support the project.

“The moment they push that button...thousands of gallons of fresh water, thousands of particles of fish nutrient, young fish, even small juvenile fish, will be sucked into that screen,” said Willy Courtney from the Shubenacadie River Commercial Fishermen’s Association.

A group of residents has filed an appeal as well. Colin Hawks and his wife live less than half a kilometre from the storage site.

“The site has been described to do with natural gas storage in salt caverns, has been described by Alton Gas as being safe. Past history and even recent ones including Los Angeles has proven that is not the case. These sites are the least used and the most problematic of all the storage sites.”

In a statement, Alton Natural Gas Storage says it respects the rights of stakeholders to appeal the government’s decision and that they plan to work with community and First Nations members during the next phase of their project.

“The project has been designed to the highest levels of safety and environmental protection,” the statement reads. “This includes appropriate environmental and ecosystem measures to protect the Shubenacadie River, its fish and fish habitat.”

Despite the appeals that have been filed, work will continue at the site for now.

The deadline for appeals is next Monday. The environment minister will then have 60 days until she renders a decision.

**Direct Link:** <http://globalnews.ca/news/2526258/first-nations-environmental-groups-appealing-alton-gas-project-approval/>

## **Ontario First Nation declares state of emergency after radioactive particles found in local water source**

National News | February 18, 2016 by APTN National News |



**Brandi Morin**

**APTN National News**

A First Nation in northwestern Ontario has declared a state of emergency after receiving a do not consume water advisory from Health Canada officials February 12.

The advisory is step above a boil water advisory and was ordered due to traces of radionuclide found in the local water source and higher than normal lead levels.

Northwest Angle #33 First Nation Chief Darlene Comegan said in a statement that her community is tired of being ignored by both provincial and federal governments and is calling on them to take immediate action to help.

“In light of the Federal government’s plan to ensure clean drinking water for First Nations ... we are living in third world conditions and it is just not acceptable. It is beyond Chief Comegan’s understanding that we can be forgotten by everyone,” the statement read.



The chief and other leadership met with a cancer study team in Toronto last week to come up with a plan to address the high cancer rates found in the community and surrounding area believed linked to their water source.

“It’s a very scary issue. Our members always knew there was an issue with the water,” said Norma Girard, land manager for Northwest Angle #33. “How many more of our people do we have to see suffer and die from cancer?”

Although there are fewer than 50 people living on reserve due to safety concerns around water and road access, Girard said they’re concerned for the elders, young children and new born baby that are living currently there.

The First Nation has been supplying bottled water to community members since 2011, which Girard said was funded via “wherever they could find it”.

They’ve been utilizing two portable water treatment plants for the last 15 years.

“Those were put in place at the time as a temporary solution,” said Girard.

The reserve is located in the Kenora district of northwestern Ontario and is only accessible by boat in the summer time and ice road in the winter.

Leadership is further concerned about the upcoming spring breakup that will make it more difficult to deliver clean drinking water.

The problem extends to a lack of access to electricity that could power a proper water treatment plant.

The community sits on the Manitoba/Minnesota border and currently pays high costs for hydro electricity from the U.S. which purchases it from Manitoba and is fed there on a marine cable. They’re in the midst of applying for a direct power line through Manitoba Hydro.

“We’ve always been on a capacity issue. We can only do so much with that cable that we have. If we want a water plant we have to have power to push it,” said Girard.

The lack of power means no school and limited infrastructure. Most families move to the City of Kenora so that their kids can go to school.

It’s the most vulnerable, like elders and younger children that are left being behind, said Girard.

She said leadership spoke with Indigenous and Northern Affairs today via telephone who advised they will provide money to continue supplying bottled water.

But Girard said they need more than that. Her community is dying out and they want their children back home.

“How can we have a community without children? What is home without the sounds of their voices playing nearby?”

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has vowed to end the water crisis in First Nations communities within 5 years and Girard said they’re trusting him to keep his word.

“Based on the Speech from the Throne, Justin Trudeau’s promises...we’re hoping. That’s our hope that the Federal government will do something,” said Girard.

**Direct Link:** <http://aptn.ca/news/2016/02/18/ontario-first-nation-declares-state-of-emergency-after-radioactive-particles-found-in-local-water-source/>

## Land Claims & Treaty Rights

### Modern day treaties fundamentally reshaping Canada for the better

**Comprehensive land agreements key to real nation-to-nation relationships with indigenous peoples**

By Kim Baird, Clint Davis, Jason Madden, [for CBC News](#) Posted: Feb 13, 2016 7:00 AM ET Last Updated: Feb 13, 2016 7:00 AM ET



Brian Mulroney signs the Nunavut Land Claim Agreement, 1993, with James Eetoolook, Paul Quassa, Titus Allooloo and Tom Siddon looking on. (Nick Newbery)

The Trudeau government has committed to resetting the relationship with First Nations, Métis and Inuit people, and has rightfully made indigenous issues a national priority.

Progress will be slow, but the commitments to implementing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 recommendations and a national inquiry on missing and murdered indigenous women and girls are steps in the right direction.

While these developments have created much needed optimism amongst indigenous peoples, creating processes will not be enough: significant financial investments will be required.

The usual critics will say that throwing "taxpayer money" at dysfunctional systems will not fix anything. Those critics, along with many Canadians, however, are often unaware of the success being achieved through modern day treaties.

## Advancing reconciliation

These comprehensive land claims agreements, which settle long outstanding grievances and provide for real indigenous self-determination, require more understanding, attention and examination as we advance reconciliation in this country.

Since 1975, with the signing of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, 26 other modern day treaties have been agreed to between the Crown and indigenous peoples covering nearly 40 per cent of Canada's land mass.

These agreements have provided for indigenous ownership of over 600,000 square kilometres of land, financial transfers of over \$3.2 billion, co-management regimes, resource revenue sharing and law-making powers.

It is worth noting that some of these new treaties have been negotiated where treaties already existed as a means to give effect to the original intent of those historic treaties.



This map is for illustration purposes only. ([landclaimcoalition.ca/](http://landclaimcoalition.ca/))

## Real nation-to-nation relationships

These modern day treaties are fundamentally reshaping Canada for the better. We say this because modern treaties and self-government agreements are actually working. These agreements enable indigenous peoples to begin to rebuild their communities or nations on their own terms, with a solid constitutional, legal, economic and governance foundation.

Instead of living under Crown-imposed systems like the Indian Act, modern treaty holders have a vested interest in making their negotiated agreements work.

These agreements also allow for internal reconciliation to occur through better governance systems that increase transparency and rebalance accountability to indigenous citizens — not to officials in Ottawa.

Equally important, these agreements create real nation-to-nation relationships. They establish effective multilateral arrangements between all levels of government — indigenous, federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal. These types of inter-governmental approaches make sense in a federation like Canada.

Through these arrangements indigenous governments are given the tools they need in the 21st century, rather than continuing to tinker with the legislative relics of our colonial past.

Finally, these agreements provide much improved land and economic foundations that will enable indigenous governments to ultimately become self-determining and self-sufficient.

Rather than continuing to simply manage their own poverty, financial transfer agreements enable groups to identify and spend on their own priorities to meet their citizens' needs.

Moreover, these agreements include provisions that enable groups to unlock and meaningfully participate in economic opportunities throughout their territories.

## **Impact on regional economies**

The impact on regional economies has been significant, and has happened in all areas of the country.

The Tsawwassen First Nation, just outside of Vancouver, is a partner in projects totalling \$750 million. The ThchQ government, and its businesses, has contributed \$450 million to the Northwest Territories' economy over the last decade. Then there is the multi-million dollar revenue growth by Nunatsiavut Group of Companies through aggressive business acquisition in Atlantic Canada.

These treaties are allowing indigenous governments to become real partners with other governments and industry.

These opportunities demonstrate that indigenous peoples are not opposed to resource development in their territories if they are able to equally benefit and if there are environmental safeguards.

In the relatively short period since 1975, we are already seeing improved outcomes in health and social indicators in modern treaty areas. Recent studies by the C.D. Howe Institute and the Fraser Institute also confirm these agreements are paying off.

These results stand in stark contrast to other federal policy approaches.

## **Time to 'double down' on treaties**

The answer is simple: Canada must double down on modern day treaty making with interested and willing indigenous peoples.

With a renewed commitment, combined with necessary changes to currently outdated, ungenerous and legally suspect federal policies, the logjams and delays that have developed over the last decade of indifference to treaty making could begin to be removed.

Modern treaty making, including the potential use of these templates for historic treaty renewal or for addressing the claims of other indigenous peoples, for those open to such an approach, is how real reconciliation with indigenous peoples will be advanced.

It is the "real change" indigenous peoples are looking for.

---

*Kim Baird (Coast Salish) is the former chief of the Tsawwassen First Nation, Clint Davis (Inuit) is the Chair of the Nunatsiavut Group of Companies and Jason Madden (Métis) is managing partner in the law firm Pape Salter Teillet LLP.*

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/modern-day-treaties-reshaping-canada-1.3440267>

## **3 B.C. First Nations plan to buy Jericho land parcel**

**'I think this is an opportunity to bring people together and do something amazing,' says NDP MLA David Eby**

CBC News Posted: Feb 12, 2016 7:18 PM PT Last Updated: Feb 12, 2016 7:23 PM PT



Three First Nations groups in B.C. have announced plans to buy a 38.8-acre parcel of land on Vancouver's West Side.

Three B.C. First Nations have announced their intention to purchase a 38.8-acre parcel of land in West Point Grey, the province announced Friday.

A letter of intent has been signed by the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations, which permits them to begin working with their communities to come to an agreement with the government.

The land in question is a provincial Crown land parcel, which is located next to the existing federal Jericho lands.

"If a sales agreement is concluded, it will allow for a meaningful community consultation process between the First Nations and the City of Vancouver on what the community would like to see with respect to future development of the lands," the government said in a statement.

David Eby, the New Democrat MLA for Vancouver-Point Grey, said he hopes there is a high level of consultation, so that eventually affordable housing can be provided there.

"I think this is an opportunity to bring people together and do something amazing and it won't happen if the property is simply sold on the market for the highest value because that will be luxury condos sold on the international market because that's what's happening in our communities right now," Eby said.

The Jericho lands consist of two parcels totaling 38.8 acres, which are owned by the province and another 52 acres, which were recently transferred from the federal government to the Musqueam, the Squamish and the Tsleil-Waututh First Nations, and the Canada Lands Corporation.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/jericholands-firstnations-b-c-government-1.3447095>

## **Northern Shuswap First Nations vote to proceed in treaty process**

*posted Feb 14, 2016 at 11:00 AM*

The Northern Shuswap Tribal Council and its affiliated NStQ Treaty Group have received a mandate to move forward in the BC treaty process after a referendum vote held Thursday.

Community members of Stswecem'c Xgat'tem First Nation (Dog Creek/Canoe Creek), Tsq'escen' (Canim Lake Indian Band), Xats'üll (Soda Creek Indian Band, and T'exelc (Williams Lake Indian Band) voted on the following ballot question:

“Do you support the recommendation of the NStQ Leadership Council to proceed to Final Agreement Negotiations?”

Results of the referendum released by NStQ Friday stated at Canim Lake Band of 458 eligible voters, 125 voted yes and 84 voted no.

At Soda Creek of 336 eligible voters, 90 voted yes and 48 voted no.

At Canoe Creek and Dog Creek of the 582 eligible voters, 113 voted yes and 72 voted no.

“As Chief of the SXFN, I welcome the positive results of our AIP vote and congratulate Stswecem'c Xgattem membership for voting,” stated Chief Patrick Harry, Stswecem'c Xgat'tem First Nation. “We have chosen to continue to the final stage of negotiation in the BC Treaty process. With this mandate, SXFN will return to the table with greater determination to negotiate a final agreement that will see more of our traditional SXFN territory returned.”

Harry said community leaders remain resolute in their desire to secure a governance role over land use, environmental protection, economic development and the stewardship of all resources.

“It is our right and responsibility,” Harry stated. “SXFN leadership commits to world-class engagement with all of our citizens to ensure that the final agreement reflects the vision and values of all of our membership.”

No numbers were released from the vote at Williams Lake Indian Band because mid-way through voting day Thursday, the polling station was closed due to an aggressive protestor who smashed a ballot box and another who ripped up some ballots.

A full re-vote for members of WLIB will take place on March 15, 2016.

The vote was not on the NStQ Treaty itself, a process which the NStQ has been involved in since 1994, the NStQ said in a press release.

“This referendum determines whether the NStQ membership wish to continue into the final negotiations stage (Stage Five) of the six-stage made-in-BC Treaty Process. If membership votes “yes” to moving forward into Stage Five, that process can take anywhere from three to five years to complete,” the press release stated, noting once a final agreement is negotiated, NStQ membership will conduct a final vote whether to accept the negotiated treaty, before its implementation or stage six can begin.



Direct Link: <http://www.wltribune.com/news/368776421.html>

## Alberta violates Aboriginal and Treaty rights in tar sands region: report

| February 17, 2016 by Brandi Morin |



**Brandi Morin**

**APTN National News**

The Province of Alberta is refusing to release a scathing study revealing how it violates Aboriginal and Treaty rights when it comes to tar sands developments.

The province has had the report since last July.

Some of the violations include: failing to be effective or meaningful for the “inclusion of Aboriginal Peoples in land-use planning, disregard for traditional land uses and culture, failing to include consideration of continued access and peaceful use/occupation of reserve lands; and failing to protect the environment of Treaty holders.

A government appointed panel conducted a review of the Lower Athabasca Regional Plan (LARP) that revealed government approved industrial development projects are violating the rights of the people who live there.

The LARP helps direct government policies when it comes to development in the tar sands. This study began in 2014 and was the first of its kind in the province, an initiative under the Alberta Land Stewardship Act.

The review was prompted after five First Nations and one Metis community applied for a review of the report claiming that they are “directly and adversely affected” by it.

APTN National News obtained a copy of the report that showed, in almost every instance, the review panel agrees with the concerns of Indigenous groups and recommends the government take action.

Some of the First Nations involved stated clearly in their submissions to the panel that they believe:

“The Lower Athabasca Regional Plan is being applied by decision-makers and relied upon by tar sands companies to preclude the protection of Aboriginal and Treaty rights and land uses.’

Eriel Deranger, communication coordinator for Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation (ACFN) located downstream from the tar sands in Northern Alberta, said she believes the government was hiding the report because of what it contains.

“Because the plan is legislated. A lot of the projects, questions and queries were surrounding the oil sands region,” said Deranger. “We have a crashing price of oil, a crashing economy right now. Now First Nations are putting forward a report that says these development projects are a direct violation of our treaty and Aboriginal rights.”



A Syncrude refinery in northern Alberta. Photo: Brandi Morin

ACFN only received a copy of the report a few weeks ago.

“They wanted to share an early embargoed copy of the report and discuss moving forward...But it should have been in the public’s domain since it was done,” explained Deranger.

Alberta Environment Minister Shannon Phillips said the government wasn’t trying to keep the findings secret, however they are in the midst of “crafting a response to it.”

Phillips said she hand delivered a copy of the report in recent weeks to each of the communities affected.

“We took the time to analyze the report and find ways that we could respond to its recommendations. What we’ve done since is gone to the communities in the review panel process and I’ve visited them myself,” said Phillips. “To give them a copy to discuss some of the ways they’re responding to it so that we can work with communities... rather than simply dumping a response on them.”

But with the NDP’s commitments to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and building new relationships, the government’s actions or reluctance to address the LARP is contradictory, said Deranger.

In many instances in the report the government washes their hands of addressing the recommendations and shuffles the responsibility onto the federal government.

Meanwhile the province has been using the LARP to make decisions on the expansion and development of the tar sands based on LARP, something Deranger says the two governments need to figure out sooner than later.

“The issue around Treaty and Aboriginal rights should be a jurisdictional issue for the federal government. And that the provincial governments are over stepping their boundaries by making decisions to erode, degrade, and abrogate Treaty and Aboriginal title through legislation and policy,” said Deranger.

The report pointed to a recent environmental study undertaken by the ACFN and the nearby Mikisew Cree First Nation which found higher than normal levels of pollutants in wild caught foods in the area stating:

“The research found contaminants in traditional foods such as muskrat and moose. It also found that Aboriginal community members feel less healthy than they did a generation ago. In the study, wildlife was tested for environmental contaminants, including heavy metals and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons. Some of the findings found arsenic levels were high enough in muskrat, moose and duck that they were of concern for young children. Mercury levels were also high for duck muscle, kidneys and livers as well as moose and muskrat kidneys. The report remarked that community members are eating less “country foods” because they have been warned off.”

That is concerning for Mikisew Cree hunter and trapper Robert Grandjambe who practices his traditional way of life in and around Fort Chipewyan.

“It’s pretty alarming to start hearing these things,” said Grandjambe who is witnessing changes to the land and coming across sick animals on a regular basis. “But at the same

time it's hard to know where to point the finger, whether it's caused by industry or climate change or who knows what else?"

He said he would rather eat the food he harvests off the land than the high priced and processed foods found at local grocery stores.

"The energy and content of what I consume off the land, I definitely feel the stamina, strength and power of the traditional foods that I eat," he said. "When I eat anything from the store, I'm very lethargic, very tired and don't have the same energy content. I definitely recognize the difference."

The sounding of the alarm needs to be heeded, he said, before it's too late.

"It's a very scary thought to actually think that 10 years down the road or even 5 years down the road that we cannot practice our way of surviving. Why do we have to wait till that point to get it fixed? Let's figure out these facts now while we have the time," said Grandjambe.



Meanwhile 173km south, in Fort McKay, a First Nation community along the Athabasca River and located in the thick of industrial activity, has been at the center of attention over health impacts.

The report urged the government to conduct a health study on contaminants in the Athabasca River happen as soon as possible along with a human-health study.

Fort McKay family physician Dr. John O'Connor has been advocating for a health study for years.

He said he believes the priorities of government are way out of balance.

“It’s profit over health,” he said. “At this point I have no doubt in my mind-no doubt, that’s the reason that these studies have not gone ahead at all because there’s certain fear of what may be found.”

He seeing increased cases of uncommon skin conditions like eczema and other rashes, respiratory problems and peculiar cancers have “popped up” in the community in recent years that he suspects is related to exposure to pollutants in the environment.

He said he feels frustrated that a health study keeps being put off and feels powerless to stop the havoc industry is unleashing to human health.

“As a doctor I feel very betrayed. And I’m very sad and angry at the same time. We are tasked with looking after the health of people and there should be no conditions on that. There appears to be a concerted effort (by governments) to protect industry at the expense of the environment and health of the people downstream.”

Deranger believes the reports damning evidence is an opportunity for the government to put to test their commitments to rebuild relationships with Indigenous Peoples.

“They (NDP) have an opportunity to re-evaluate the Lower Athabasca Regional Plan in direct partnership with us. They can look at this as a bunch of angry Indians or we can look at this as a really great opportunity for the new government to show its muscle as to what it’s actually doing to address the rights issues, conservation and diversification of land use in the province,” explained Deranger.

Environment Minister Phillips said the government is taking it one step at a time.

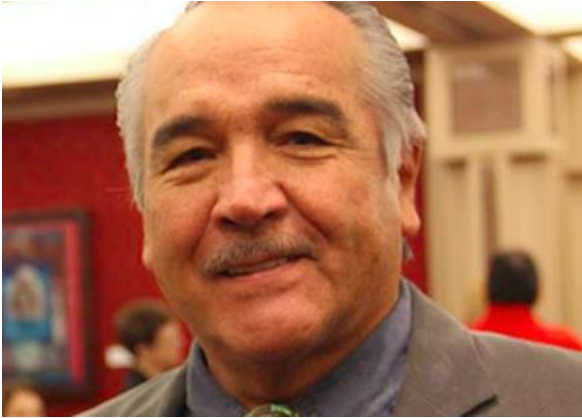
“The fact of the matter is is that the Lower Athabasca Regional Plan was a multi-year process. There are a number of different frameworks that triggered the threshold of various aspects related to monitoring and our government is committed to taking a thoughtful and careful approach on these matters in partnership with Indigenous Peoples,” said Phillips.

**Direct Link:** <http://aptn.ca/news/2016/02/17/alberta-violates-aboriginal-and-treaty-rights-in-tar-sands-region-report/>

## **Fighting for status: Canada's off-reserve aboriginal population**

Dwight Dorey on the 17-year legal battle for recognition.

By Michael Lightstone



Cole Harbour's Dwight Dorey is a national chief with the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples.

National chief Dwight Dorey of the Ottawa-based Congress of Aboriginal Peoples has been meeting with indigenous men and women across the country, holding consultations regarding the Supreme Court of Canada's anticipated ruling on whether aboriginals who live off-reserve are Indians under the Constitution Act and therefore entitled to the rights that fall under federal jurisdiction. The top court's decision will affect about 400,000 non-status natives and approximately 200,000 Metis.

Dorey, of Cole Harbour, is a 68-year-old Mi'kmaw man and a former president of the Native Council of Nova Scotia. He was with the late Metis leader Harry Daniels when the Saskatchewan native filed the initial court challenge in 1999. While holding consultations in the Maritimes, Dorey spoke with The Coast about the upcoming legal decision.

---

**This case has taken about 17 years to decide—were you preparing for a long legal battle from the get-go?**

Not as long as it has actually taken. Partly because we didn't really expect the Crown to go all out in trying to have the case thrown out—have it dragged out—and that's really been the case with it. And so, this has gone on a bit longer than what we originally expected.

**How many off-reserve indigenous people live in Nova Scotia, and how would their lives change should the Supreme Court rule in their favour?**

In Nova Scotia, the numbers are about equal in terms of on-reserve and off-reserve. [Perhaps 14,000 live off-reserve.] The case is going to have a significant impact on off-reserve, mainly non-status and Metis people right across the country.

**What prompted Mr. Daniels to launch this case back in '99?**

It was mainly because [the forerunner of] the Congress, which had been in business since the early '70s, would all through the years regularly deal with the non-status and Metis issues and the jurisdictional question always came up. The federal government would basically take a position that if you're not status Indians living on the reserve, then you fall within provincial jurisdiction. The provinces would, however, say if you claim to be of Indian ancestry—non-status or Metis—then you are a federal responsibility. So we

described ourselves as “the forgotten people,” and there were growing problems with health and other related quality-of-life issues we felt needed to be dealt with.

**If the Supreme Court decides for the Metis and non-status indians, what would have to happen in the near future—negotiations between Ottawa and the indigenous parties?**

That would be sort of the next step. The federal Court of Appeal actually ruled on non-status and Metis people. What it didn't rule in favour of, and we wanted the declaration, was that the federal government has a fiduciary duty to all aboriginal people—and that non-status natives and Metis have the right to be consulted and negotiated with. So basically, that's what was appealed to the Supreme Court.

**And should they emerge victorious, any idea what this would mean to the Canadian taxpayer, in terms of federal dollars earmarked for the affected aboriginal groups?**

It's going to be a significant cost to the federal government, in our view. However, if we win the case it doesn't mean (Ottawa) has to do anything. Technically, I guess that's right. But it would be incumbent on myself, and the leadership of the Metis and non-status people, to pressure the government to do something.

*Interview conducted and edited by Michael Lightstone*

**Direct Link:** <http://www.thecoast.ca/halifax/fighting-for-status-canadas-off-reserve-aboriginal-population/Content?oid=5221501>

## **Special Topic: Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women**

### **Yale First Nation puts hold on treaty implementation**

Statement cites 'flaws' that cannot be solved within treaty process

**BY PETER O'NEIL AND ROB SHAW, VANCOUVER SUN FEBRUARY 11, 2016**



Aboriginal dip-net fishing on the Fraser River near Lillooet. Overlapping fishing rights with the St:Lo Nation that need to be worked out is one of the reasons given for the Yale First Nation putting the brakes on implementing their new treaty.



B.C.'s troubled treaty process has been dealt another major blow with the announcement Thursday by a tiny First Nation along the Fraser River that it is suspending implementation of its agreement.

The Yale First Nation is one of a handful of First Nations to complete negotiations with the federal and B.C. governments since the costly process began in 1992.

Yale Chief Ken Hansen, who in a December interview said he was hopeful of a renewed relationship with Ottawa following Justin Trudeau's election win, was not available Thursday.

But the chief and his council issued a terse statement Thursday saying the deal won't be implemented.

"The Yale final agreement has critical flaws that cannot be resolved within the current B.C. treaty process," the statement said. "We want to look ahead to how we can meet the real, pressing needs of our people, in a relationship of mutual cooperation and respect."

B.C. Aboriginal Relations Minister John Rustad confirmed that the Yale won't meet their April 2016 target date.

He said the delay is related to an dispute with the much larger Sto:lo First Nation over fishing rights in the Fraser Canyon.

"What they've said to me is they felt they wanted to be able to work out and reach more closely with the Sto:lo. So we're trying to figure out what does that mean? How do we actually do this? Because we've never actually had anybody that's gone down this route now after everything has been ratified."

Rustad expressed disappointment. "When you see the benefits First Nations have experienced in treaty, its huge," he said in an interview. "All the nations that have entered into treaty have significantly progressed in terms of what they have been able to do for their culture and people, (and) for their ... economy."

The minister said it's "unfortunate" the Yale are pulling away but said his officials will continue to work with them to reach the implementation stage.

Sto:lo Tribal Council Grand Chief Doug Kelly praised the decision, saying Hansen's leadership after replacing former chief Bob Hope has led to positive and "respectful" talks with the Sto:lo.

While more than 100 B.C. "bands" under the Indian Act are involved in the treaty process, only three treaties have been implemented — involving the Tsawwassen First Nation in the Lower Mainland, the Maa-nulth group of First Nations on Vancouver Island, and — in negotiations that took place outside the formal treaty process — the Nisga'a Nation in northwestern B.C.

The Yale and Tla'amin First Nations are listed in the B.C. Treaty Commission's 2015 annual report as the only two that have been ratified but not implemented. The Tla'amin deal, in the Powell River area, is to be implemented in April.

The process has been enormously costly. Since negotiations began in 1993 the commission has distributed \$656 million in funding, of which \$515 million was in loans and the rest in grants, to First Nations.

The loans come from the federal government, while Ottawa covers 60 per cent of the grants and B.C. is responsible for the remaining 40 per cent.

That total doesn't include all the costs absorbed by the federal and provincial governments.

The Yale entered the treaty process in 1994, struck an agreement-in-principle in 2006 and completed a final agreement in 2013. Both the federal and B.C. legislatures passed enabling legislation.

### **Yale Treaty**

The treaty with the Yale First Nation included these elements:

- 1,966 hectares of land, including sub-surface rights, made up of 1,749 hectares of Crown land added to 217 hectares of reserve land.
- A \$10.7 million transfer once the agreement took effect, less about \$7.8 million lent to Yale to cover negotiating costs.

That debt to the federal government totalled \$7.8 million, according to the Yale 2014-15 financial statement.

- \$700,000 in annual funding, of which \$125,000 was to be provided by Victoria and the rest by Ottawa, to fund "programs and services related to social development, education, local programs and services, physical works, and a community development officer."
- An additional \$1.4 million in one-time funding, plus roughly \$600,000 in annual funding, was to be provided "to support incremental implementation and governance activities such as lands and resource management, governance and treaty management, fisheries management, culture and heritage management, and migratory birds management," according to a federal government statement in 2013. "Yale First Nation will contribute to the funding of agreed-upon programs and services from its own sources of revenue."
- The deal also included extensive fishing rights on their privately-held land, with the caveat that the Yale had agreed to "allow reasonable public access to all lands for

temporary recreational uses and temporary non-commercial purposes. This will include reasonable opportunities to hunt and fish, as well as First Nations' traditional purposes."

Read

more:<http://www.vancouversun.com/news/yale+first+nation+puts+hold+treaty+implementation/11714025/story.html#ixzz40M9It2js>

## Missing and murdered aboriginal inquiry a waste of money says local advocate

Edmonton, Alberta / 630 CHED - Edmonton Breaking News, Traffic, Weather and Sports Radio Station

[Joel Lefevre](#)

Posted: February 12, 2016 01:57 pm



Photo courtesy of Missing and murdered indigenous march Edmonton

The federal inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women is being labelled as a waste of money by a local advocate here in Edmonton.

That's what Danielle Boudreau is calling the Liberals campaign promise to spend \$40 million to launch an inquiry into the issue which will last two years.

The organizer of Edmonton's annual Memorial March for missing and murdered indigenous women tells 630CHED's Ryan Jespersen why she feels the inquiry will do little to alleviate the pain felt by aboriginal families

"I don't feel that the government can offer closure to 2500 plus families of missing and murdered women, how can they do that? There's not even 2500 members in our government, to be able to sit there and listen to the stories, to have empathy for these families and to say what can we do to help you? Because you know what there's no money in this world, I don't care how much money you have that is going to bring our family members back" says Boudreau.

Boudreau lost her sister Juanita Cardinal in a homicide case back on February 26, 2006. She adds that while aboriginals have suffered a lot it's not only indigenous women and men that have been found missing and murdered. She believes the money would be better spent on things like educational training to have a curriculum for youth on issues like safe sex and drinking and driving among others. (JSL/RJ)

**Direct Link:** <http://www.630ched.com/2016/02/12/missing-and-murdered-aboriginal-inquiry-a-waste-of-money-says-local-advocate/>

## **Inuit groups gather suggestions for missing and murdered indigenous women inquiry process**

**Some families don't want to travel; others want to ensure access to culturally-relevant counselling**

By Sima Sahar Zerehi, CBC News Posted: Feb 12, 2016 2:33 PM CT Last Updated: Feb 12, 2016 2:33 PM CT

Inuit organizations and families of missing and murdered Inuit women and girls met in Ottawa this week to draft recommendations on an Inuit-specific approach to the inquiry.

"We want this inquiry to go as best as possible for the Inuit," said Rebecca Kudloo, president of Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, which was hosting the meetings.

"We don't want to be left behind or forgotten. We are saying we are here and this is how we want it done in order for it to be beneficial for Inuit."

The four-day meeting follows the pre-inquiry consultations held in Iqaluit at the end of January.

The Ottawa meeting included family members from each of the four Inuit regions, as well as representatives from women's shelters in the Inuit regions, Tungasuvvingat Inuit, Makivik Corporation, and Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami.

## **Going further than sharing stories**

The conversation included gathering insights on what families need to make the inquiry work for them.

'We don't want to be left behind or forgotten, we are saying we are here and this is how we want it done in order for it to be beneficial for Inuit,' said Rebecca Kudloo the president of Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada the organization hosting the meetings.

"It gave them a chance to go further than testifying to what happened to them. It's also looking forward to start to tell the government and our leaders, this is what should be in place to help the families of murdered and missing.

"Some families didn't want to travel long distances; it adds a lot more stress and it opens wounds they haven't dealt with for a long time."

The group also discussed using the counselling services of local organizations when possible instead of relying on the support services of outsiders unfamiliar with the communities. Some suggestions were also made on the structure of the inquiry in light of the experience that Inuit had with similar proceedings.

## **Circle wanted**

"The Truth and Reconciliation Commission did great work but the commissioners were sitting in the front and people walked up to speak to a mic. We don't want that. We wanted more like a circle, where the commissioners would be there at their level. That's the Inuit way," said Kudloo.

Kudloo said the group also talked about best approaches to issues such as policing.

"We're starting to look forward and say these are the services we need and this is how we want to see the correctional services work better so we're not victimized again when we go through court."

The families had many questions, including whether the findings from the inquiry will mean a reopening of some of the cases of the missing and murdered women and girls, said Kudloo.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/inuit-mmiw-inquiry-process-1.3446325>

## **Federal ministers fault police response to cases of missing and murdered indigenous women**

JAMES WOOD, CALGARY HERALD

Published on: February 12, 2016 | Last Updated: February 12, 2016 5:57 PM MST

Federal cabinet ministers holding talks ahead of a promised inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women say it's clear the number of cases has been under-reported nationally.

Carolyn Bennett and Patty Hajdu, who were in Calgary Friday as they prepare to wrap up initial consultations, told reporters it's also apparent there is an ongoing problem with police not thoroughly investigating cases involving indigenous women — leading to homicides being classified as suicides, accidents or overdoses.

“These are horrific stories that mean there is really no trust in a justice system that won't follow up these kinds of cases,” Bennett, minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, said during a break from closed-door meetings with victims' families.

“The need to reopen some of these cases was a very resounding message today.”

Patty Hajdu, minister of the status of women, said she has “a resounding sense that there's such a lack of compassion from all of the early responders when someone is missing or someone is murdered.”



**Patty Hajdu, Minister of Status of Women at the news conference. Mike Drew/Postmedia**

“We've heard people talk about reporting their loved one (missing) and no action for 24 hours, 48 hours.”

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau promised a public inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women in last year's federal election.

Bennett has spoken with more than 1,300 people on a cross-country tour to lay the groundwork for the inquiry, which is expected to commence this spring.

A 2014 RCMP report revealed there were nearly 1,200 investigations into missing and murdered indigenous women across Canada from 1980 to 2012.

More than 200 of these cases involved homicides in Alberta, accounting for 28 per cent of all female homicides in the province during the period.

Across the country, there were 225 unsolved cases, including 120 homicides and 105 suspicious missing persons cases, the RCMP report found.

Indigenous women represent four per cent of the Canadian population, but account for 16 per cent of all murdered women and 11 per cent of all missing women.

Bennett said the mishandling of cases is one factor in making those numbers suspect.

“Today, there was a real underlining of the understanding that the numbers can’t be right. People from Siksika (Nation) saying, ‘We already know many, many women and girls that aren’t on the list and that haven’t been counted,’” she said.

“The need for better data is hugely, hugely important.”

Insp. Gibson Glavin said the RCMP wouldn’t comment on the ministers’ concerns, saying the force respects the community outreach taking place and it doesn’t want to create an “adversarial relationship” with families who have come forward.

“They need to know they can speak freely,” said Glavin, who is in charge of the RCMP’s strategic communications in Alberta. “We are supportive and we are right behind all this process.”

On its website, the RCMP says the police service “investigates all cases of reported missing and murdered persons, within our jurisdiction, regardless of sex, ethnicity, background or lifestyle ... there is a need, however, to address the fact that aboriginal women face considerably higher risks of violence and homicide.”

The Mounties say numerous task forces across the country are working on the cases.

In December, RCMP commissioner Bob Paulson told an Assembly of First Nations meeting that “I understand there are racists in my police force.”

“I don’t want them to be in my police force.”

No one from the Calgary Police Service was available to comment Friday.

Bennett told reporters it will be a balancing act to make sure the inquiry’s focus isn’t too narrow or too broad, which would make it impossible to complete in the time that the families expect.

But in Edmonton, an organizer of a memorial march for missing and murdered indigenous women said the \$40-million inquiry is a waste of money.

Danielle Boudreau, who lost her sister in a homicide 10 years ago, told a radio station the inquiry will do little to alleviate the pain felt by aboriginal families.

“There’s no money in this world — I don’t care how much money you have — that is going to bring our family members back.”

**Direct Link:** <http://calgaryherald.com/news/politics/federal-ministers-fault-police-response-to-cases-of-missing-and-murdered-indigenous-women>

## **Annual march remembers missing and murdered indigenous women**

**Vancouver, BC, Canada / News Talk 980 CKNW | Vancouver's News.  
Vancouver's Talk**

[Roshini Nair](#)

Posted: February 14, 2016 01:23 pm

| Last Updated: February 14, 2016 02:01 pm



*Federal Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould and Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson*

The streets of the Downtown Eastside were packed today, for the 26th annual march to remember missing and murdered indigenous women.

Many expressed hope for change in light of the Liberal government's promise for an inquiry, and the appointment of Canada's first indigenous woman Minister of Justice. Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould attended the March, her first since becoming Canada's Justice Minister.

*"Today is about recognizing and remembering their lives the missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, and honouring their lives and working the families and all of the advocates."*

Wilson-Raybould also addressed criticism that the inquiry process was not inclusive enough.

*"We're going to continue with our meetings across the country, and I hope that perception of not being inclusive is overcome."*



March organizer Fay Blaney said yesterday that she was hoping feminist groups and advocates would be involved in the inquiry process, not just families.

*“Issues relating to the family are historic, and our concern is what’s happening to the survivors going forward.”*

According to a November report by Statistics Canada, indigenous women were six times more likely to be murdered in Canada than other women.

The Liberal government is currently doing preliminary meetings with families before setting up a formal inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cknw.com/2016/02/14/annual-march-remembers-missing-and-murdered-indigenous-women/>

## Pre-inquiry on missing, murdered aboriginal women to be held in Calgary

By [Melissa Ramsay](#) Online Reporter Global News, February 12, 2016 6:53 am



CALGARY – The federal minister of Indigenous Affairs will visit Calgary on Friday to meet with families of missing and murdered aboriginal women.

Carolyn Bennett is gathering input from Canadians ahead of the federal Liberal government’s national inquiry into the issue.

Bennet will be joined by Patty Hajdu, minister of status of women.

The pre-inquiry, which is not open to the public, will involve survivors, family members, victim’s loved ones as well as members of indigenous organizations and communities and representatives.

The stop in Calgary is among the last of the pre-inquiry consultations being held across the country. Other consultations have taken place in Halifax, Montreal, Winnipeg and Edmonton.

The final consultation will be held in Ottawa next week.

The national inquiry will be designed after the consultations are completed. Details of the inquiry including its mandate, terms of reference, format and timeline will then be released.

– *With files from Julia Wong*

**Direct Link:** <http://globalnews.ca/news/2513958/pre-inquiry-on-missing-murdered-aboriginal-women-to-be-held-in-calgary/>

## **Cambrian honours murdered Aboriginal women**

By [Sudbury Star Staff](#)

Friday, February 12, 2016 2:30:48 EST PM



On Tuesday, Cambrian College's Wabnode Centre for Aboriginal Services is hosting a ceremony and a feast to honour missing and murdered Aboriginal women.

The ceremony will take place outdoors at the College's sacred fire arbour at 10:30 a.m., during which participants will be invited to make prayers and offerings.

A feast in the Student Life Centre will follow the ceremony.

All are welcome to attend to honour Aboriginal women who are missing or have been murdered.

Last year, Cambrian students commemorated missing and murdered Aboriginal women by hand-crafting faceless dolls, made out of felt. The Faceless Doll Project was initiated

by the Native Women's Association of Canada to commemorate each woman and child lost because of violence or neglect.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.thesudburystar.com/2016/02/12/cambrian-honours-murdered-aboriginal-women>

## Through rain and snow, crowds march for missing and murdered indigenous women



CTVNews.ca Staff

Published Sunday, February 14, 2016 10:04PM EST

Last Updated Sunday, February 14, 2016 10:18PM EST

Sombre marches were held in several Canadian cities Sunday to commemorate the country's missing and murdered indigenous women and draw attention to the countless unsolved tragedies.

It's been more than 20 years since the first Women's Memorial March was held in Vancouver, and this year's rally comes at a moment some advocates consider a major turning point.

Under the new Liberal government in Ottawa, the first phase of a national inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women is underway. A pre-inquiry process is expected to wrap up on Monday.



People hold up signs as they participate in the 7th annual memorial march to raise awareness for the hundreds of missing and murdered aboriginal women in Montreal, Sunday, February 14, 2016. (THE CANADIAN PRESS / Graham Hughes)



Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould speaks at Vancouver's Women's Memorial March.



A young girl marches in Vancouver's 2016 Women's Memorial March.

It's the first time the march has been held since the government launched a national inquiry. Former prime minister Stephen Harper repeatedly dismissed calls for an inquiry.

Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould, who herself is aboriginal, spoke at Vancouver's march and identified two key priorities the federal government has pinpointed.

"To find justice -- some measure of justice -- for the murdered and missing indigenous women and girls, and to collectively work to find solutions to ensure that this tragedy does not continue," Wilson-Raybould said.

The RCMP has identified 1,181 cases of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. Advocates say that figure, released in 2014, continues to grow.

For some, the march carried a more personal significance. Sophie Merasty marched to honour her sister Rose Leana Merasty, who was killed in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside more than two decades ago.

"If it was possible, I would like the inquiry to look at not just her, but to open cases that are cold cases, dead cases, of missing and murdered aboriginal women," Merasty told CTV News.

With the national inquiry moving forward, march organizers used the opportunity to highlight ways they think the government should lead the investigation.

Fay Blaney, who is on the committee that organizes the Vancouver march, said the inquiry should include consultation with the victims' families, women's groups and provincial and territorial governments.

And while Blaney said the march “is significant every year,” she doesn’t need to look far back to remember feeling as though the issue was being ignored by the government.

“I recall sitting here about four or five years ago, maybe longer, saying that there needs to be a national inquiry,” she said.

In Toronto, a similar march wrapped through the city’s streets before ending at police headquarters – a gesture meant to highlight the city’s still unsolved cases of missing and murdered indigenous women. In Winnipeg, butterflies were carried through the streets as symbols of transformation.

*With a report from CTV’s Melanie Nagy*

**Direct Link:** <http://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/through-rain-and-snow-crowds-march-for-missing-and-murdered-indigenous-women-1.2777837>

## Red dresses hang in Labrador for missing and murdered aboriginal women

CBC News Posted: Feb 15, 2016 1:32 PM NT Last Updated: Feb 15, 2016 1:32 PM NT



The REDress project in a nation-wide initiative to honour the more than 1,000 missing and murdered aboriginal women in Canada. (Alyson Samson/CBC)

Dozens of red dresses hung from trees in Happy Valley-Goose Bay this Saturday, symbolizing the more than 100 missing and murdered aboriginal women from the area.

More than 30 people braved -30 C temperatures to honour lost mothers, daughters, sisters and friends.





More than 30 people gathered on Saturday to honour missing and murdered aboriginal women from Labrador. (Alyson Samson/CBC)

"It's very eye-opening to see all the red dresses being hung and recognizing the people that are murdered in Labrador," said Jennifer Hefler-Elson, executive director of the Labrador Friendship Centre.

"I'm sure it will bring awareness as people drive past and see the dresses and wonder why they're there, and hopefully they'll ask questions and see what it's all about."

The event was part of the REDress Project, a nationwide art piece honouring the more than 1,000 missing and murdered aboriginal women in Canada.

Similar events have taken place in locations across the country since 2010.

The Labrador Friendship Centre, the Mokami Status of Women Council, and other community groups helped put the event together in Happy Valley-Goose Bay for the first time this February.

## Two-years since Loretta Saunders' death

Saturday was particularly significant, as it also marked the second anniversary of the death of **Loretta Saunders**, a young Inuk woman from Labrador who was murdered in Halifax. Saunders, who was pregnant, had been researching the cases of murdered and missing aboriginal women as part of her university studies.



Forty-eight red dresses hung in Happy Valley-Goose Bay on Saturday in memory of missing and murdered aboriginal women from the area. (Alyson Samson/CBC)

Her parents were at the event, hanging a dress for their daughter and a tiny red tutu for their unborn grandchild.

"Before Loretta was murdered I didn't realize how many other Aboriginal women were murdered and missing," said Loretta's mother, Miriam Saunders.

"It's sad that it took my daughter's death in order for me to realize all the murdered and missing."

## Remembering lost family members

Another woman, Angie Michelin, came to remember her cousin Bernice Rich, who was murdered at age 23 nearly three years ago.

"She was the most happiest person that you would meet. She was not shy — she did everything for my grandmother, she helped her," said Michelin, who said her grandmother is still heartbroken over the loss.

"She was always happy. She was kind, and anybody [who] knew her would say the same."

The federal government finished consultations on how best to conduct an inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women in Canada on Monday.



More than 1,000 aboriginal women have been murdered or gone missing in Canada. (Alyson Samson/CBC)

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/red-dresses-labrador-mmiw-1.3448632>

# More than 1,200 missing or murdered: Bennett

By Kristy Kirkup The Canadian Press, February 15, 2016 6:21 am



OTTAWA – The number of missing and murdered indigenous women across the country is “way bigger” than 1,200, Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett said Monday.

Her comments came as the government marked the end of a consultation process with the families of victims as it prepares to establish a public inquiry into these losses.

The real breadth and depth of the tragedy is greater than was thought, Bennett said at a downtown Ottawa hotel as families met behind closed doors.

“It is bigger than 1,200,” she said. “Way bigger than 1,200.”

In a statement Monday evening, Bennett’s spokesperson Carolyn Campbell tried to clarify the minister’s comments, noting they were based on what she has been hearing from survivors and loved ones of missing and murdered indigenous women.

“The families believe that number of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls is higher than 1,200,” Campbell said in an email.

An RCMP report in 2014 put the tally at 1,181 murdered and missing women between 1980 and 2012. The force added another 32 deaths and 11 disappearances in a 2015 update.

Bennett, who has been travelling the country to talk to grieving loved ones, hopes the government will be able to develop the inquiry’s mandate by summer.

A key step in this process will involve naming a commissioner or commissioners to lead the examination, which is intended to be arm’s length from government once it is up and running.

The inquiry leadership will have to consider a number of questions, including whether cold cases need to be revisited, Bennett noted.



“That will be the job of the commissioners — to sort out what they feel they can do about these,” she said.

The process also needs to consider the survivors, she added.

“When we talk about families, we haven’t been focused on the people who know it could have been them, it was almost them, people who ran away from the (Robert) Pickton farm, people who woke up after being strangled,” she said.

The families have also indicated they still want to be involved once the inquiry has started, Bennett added.

Status of Women Minister Patty Hajdu said she is no stranger to tragic stories, having worked in Thunder Bay, Ont., where she ran a shelter for men, women and youth.

“Daily, I heard stories like this and witnessed personally, violence,” she said.

She said the pre-inquiry process was also emotional.

“I think that if you are truly doing this job well, you need to be able to bear witness to that pain and you need to be able to empathize without losing yourself in the grief.

“It is a very delicate balance actually ... It is our shared responsibility to hear these stories as Canadians.”

One of the most challenging aspects of the pre-inquiry phases has been hearing how hopeful people are about the process, Bennett added.

“In some ways, the hardest part is the hope that a lot of these participants are expressing, that they’re actually talking to people who can make a difference in their lives and the responsibility that we feel,” she said.

“That we have to put the concrete actions in place that will stop this tragedy.”

Claudette Commanda from Ontario’s Kitigan Zibi First Nation attended Monday’s discussions.

Canada must be accountable for racism against aboriginal people, she said.

“That’s the common theme that is coming out of this,” Commanda said.

“The families want justice and the families want healing. But importantly, the families want their voices to be heard for their loved ones because their loved ones are not here to speak.”

**Direct Link:** <http://globalnews.ca/news/2517676/more-than-1200-missing-or-murdered-bennett/>

## Vigil for missing, murdered aboriginal women draws 50



Harron Hall, third from left, holds a picture of murder victim Roxanne Louie during a vigil Sunday in Kelowna to remember missing and murdered aboriginal women.

Posted: Sunday, February 14, 2016 10:08 pm | *Updated: 10:12 pm, Sun Feb 14, 2016.*

### **Ron Seymour**

Harron Hall believes she could all too easily become one Canada's missing or murdered aboriginal women.

"I don't live a high-risk lifestyle, but I am always at risk because of my brown skin," Hall said Sunday at a rally outside the Kelowna courthouse.

Hall told a gathering of about 50 people that's she's had to fend off unwanted advances from men, been regarded as a prostitute, and been dismissed as a poor person simply because she's an aboriginal woman.

A man trying to pick her up in a restaurant became angry when she rebuffed him, Hall told the gathering.

"He told me, 'One day I'm going to see you on a milk carton,'" she said, a comment that seemed part threat and part recognition that many aboriginal women simply disappear.

"I am a life. My life is important," Hall said as she spoke at Kelowna's fifth annual memorial vigil for missing and murdered aboriginal women.

Hall is related to Roxanne Louie, a member of the Osoyoos Indian band who was murdered last year.

Hall said she knew of eight women from the Okanagan territory who are either missing or have been murdered. All of them had dreams, families and people who loved them, she said.

Aboriginal women are routinely "dehumanized and devalued," said Laurie Wilson, another speaker.

But Wilson said she was heartened by the Liberal government's pledge to convene a national inquiry this summer into missing and murdered aboriginal women.

"All of these things that are happening now are hopeful," said Wilson, who nevertheless encouraged people to do more to end racism against aboriginals.

The RCMP issued a report in 2014 that put the total of missing and murdered aboriginal women at 1,181. Indigenous women make up 4.3 per cent of the Canadian population, but the report found they account for 16 per cent of female homicides and 11.3 per cent of missing women.

Vigils to remember the victims have become common on Valentine's Day in many Canadian cities.

Chief Ursula Drynock of the Nicomen Indian band near Lytton told the Kelowna gathering she was among those who lost female relatives, and that she routinely offers prayers for the safety of aboriginal women travelling in cities, along highways or on reserves.

"I pray that our women, young and old, make it safely to their destinations," Drynock said.

Norah Bowman, who ran for the NDP in last October's federal election, read a message from Kelowna-Lake Country MP Stephen Fuhr, who was not able to attend the vigil.

Bowman said she was happy to relay Fuhr's support for the upcoming inquiry because it's an issue that should be "beyond politics."

**Direct Link:** [http://www.kelownadailycourier.ca/news/article\\_992097b2-d3aa-11e5-b02c-33e74cfef336.html](http://www.kelownadailycourier.ca/news/article_992097b2-d3aa-11e5-b02c-33e74cfef336.html)

## Stolen Sisters march remembers missing and murdered aboriginal women

MICHAEL D. REID / TIMES COLONIST

FEBRUARY 14, 2016 05:41 PM



Hundreds of supporters march down Government Street toward the B.C. legislature Sunday afternoon as part of the Stolen Sisters Memorial March. Photograph By Tony Sprackett

The message conveyed during the eighth annual Stolen Sisters Memorial March downtown on Sunday was clear: Indigenous lives matter.

An estimated 1,200 people — the largest crowd in four years — attended the march to remember aboriginal women and girls who have died or gone missing. It's one of several such marches held across Canada.

Several participants attributed the rise in attendance to cautious optimism over Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's pledge to address a long-ignored concern aired by Canada's First Nations communities. In December, Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould, the first indigenous person to hold that position, announced the launch of a national inquiry into murdered and missing indigenous women and girls.

"That news was well received," said organizer Christine Lavalley, as hundreds of supporters marched down Government Street singing the Women's Warrior Song symbolizing empowerment and unity. "There are well over 1,000 missing indigenous women now Canada-wide, and that's not even including the men, as well."

The crowd led by indigenous women, youth and drummers marched from Our Place to the front of the B.C. legislature about noon.

The marchers shared food, along with heartfelt stories, singing and drumming. Many participants from First Nations communities wore traditional garb.

Dora Joe, whose Cowichan tribes family was born and raised below the Stone Church in Duncan, delivered a moving remembrance in honour of her oldest sister Catherine, who was murdered in 1977.

Mourning the loss "of the sister who was taken from us," her tribute was poetic as she recounted the horror of the discovery, and her choice to share Catherine's story and help others rather than avenge the murder.

"That was very emotional for me," said Joe, accompanied by family members, including her sister Helen and Catherine's grownup children.

Erynne Gilpin, a local indigenous-governance program student whose family comes from the Opaskwayak Cree nation in The Pas, northern Manitoba, eloquently paid tribute to her cousin, Jill Joyal.

"I offer deep gratitude to all the families and folks here today standing for the dignity and honour of indigenous families around this world," said Gilpin.

While remembering her cousin, "a beautiful Cree Metis woman ... who couldn't make it through her first hard winter in Winnipeg," Gilpin occasionally had to compose herself.

"She is present here today, and let us walk together toward a world where all worlds can fit."

Kelly Aguirre, an indigenous activist and PhD candidate in the University of Victoria's department of political science, emphasized that Sunday's event was not a protest.

"It's not an action against the Canadian government or state," said Aguirre, holding a hand drum adorned with art. "It's a healing process, a ceremonial chance to come

together and show that these women are not forgotten. They are the lifeblood in the hearts of their people.”

Carole James, NDP MLA for Victoria-Beacon Hill, and Victoria MP Murray Rankin arrived together to show solidarity.

Praising the federal government for launching the commission “so many communities have been fighting so long to get,” James said she was heartened by the strong turnout and diversity.

“This is an issue for every Canadian and every British Columbian,” she said. “It’s an issue we all need to pay attention to.”

Rankin said its success has inspired him to speak to Wilson-Raybould and Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett.

“I’m going to say: ‘Look what I just saw. Look how many people here in our community care deeply about this. It’s reflected in the number of people who turned up today.’”

- See more at: <http://www.timescolonist.com/news/local/stolen-sisters-march-remembers-missing-and-murdered-aboriginal-women-1.2172553#sthash.9rOxixcc.dpuf>

## **Government wraps consultations on inquiry into murdered indigenous women**

**They've heard from 1,300 people, many of whom believe police have ignored their concerns**

The Canadian Press Posted: Feb 15, 2016 10:09 AM CT Last Updated: Feb 15, 2016 12:19 PM CT



As part of meetings where families of missing and murdered indigenous women were consulted about planning the national inquiry, Minister Carolyn Bennett met with Lorelei Williams, an indigenous advocate. Bennett said in total she has heard from 1,300 people, many of whom say police ignored their concerns about the issue. (CBC/Andrew Friesen)

A national inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women will come a step closer to reality on Monday, as the Trudeau government wraps up consultations on how best to conduct an in-depth examination of the issue.

Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett and Status of Women Minister Patty Hajdu are to wrap up consultations with a final meeting on Monday in the nation's capital.

The pair has been on a cross-country tour since early December to meet with the families of murdered or missing aboriginal women and girls, seeking their input on what a national inquiry should look like and what it should attempt to accomplish.

Bennett said last week they've heard from 1,300 people, many of whom believe police have ignored their concerns about missing or murdered loved ones.

The federal government hopes to have the inquiry up and running by the summer but it must first decide what the inquiry's mandate should be.

Bennett said it requires a balancing act to ensure the inquiry's focus isn't too narrow or too broad.

A 2014 report by the RCMP concluded 1,017 aboriginal women had been murdered between 1980 and 2012, and that another 164 were considered missing.

Indigenous women make up 4.3 per cent of the Canadian population but the report found they account for 16 per cent of female homicides and 11.3 per cent of missing women.

Former Conservative prime minister Stephen Harper resolutely refused to launch a national inquiry into the issue, arguing that indigenous women need action, not more studies.

However, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau promised during last fall's election campaign to immediately launch an inquiry as part of his bid to establish a new "nation to nation" relationship with indigenous peoples.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/missing-and-murdered-indigenous-women-canada-1.3448788>

## **Hundreds gather in Saskatoon to remember indigenous victims of violence**

By David Giles Senior Web Producer Global News, February 15, 2016 6:39 am



Hundreds of people gathered at Saskatoon city hall to remember indigenous women and girls who have been the victims of violence.

SASKATOON – Memorial marches were held across the country on Sunday in memory of indigenous women and girls who have been the victims of violence. At city hall in Saskatoon, several hundred gathered looking for more action from the government.

Many in the crowd said they have been touched by the tragedy.

Saskatoon police Chief Clive Weighill was in attendance and told the crowd that reducing poverty would help.

“We unfortunately have a lot of first nations, metis people living in poverty ... and I think that’s what we really need to work on if we’re going to get a head of this,” said Weighill.

Ottawa has already announced it will be holding a national inquiry.

“I think an inquiry needs to happen and it can’t just be political. I think we need people of the community, people of the organizations to also be involved in that,” said Nichole Yamchuk, the organizer of the march in Saskatoon.

A pre-inquiry consultation was held in Saskatoon last week, giving federal ministers the opportunity to meet with families of murdered and missing indigenous women.

Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett and Status of Women Minister Patty Hajdu are to wrap up consultations with a final meeting today in Ottawa.

The federal government hopes to have the inquiry up and running by the summer.

**Direct Link:** <http://globalnews.ca/news/2517786/hundreds-gather-in-saskatoon-to-remember-indigenous-victims-of-violence/>



# Round dance honours missing and murdered indigenous women and girls in Sask.

**Dianne Bigeagle says it reminds people that her missing daughter is not just a statistic**

CBC News Posted: Feb 14, 2016 5:39 PM CT Last Updated: Feb 15, 2016 5:15 PM CT



Dianne BigEagle holds up a photo at a Regina vigil of her daughter, Danita, who went missing in 2007. (Jacaudrey Charbonneau/Radio-Canada)

People travelled across the prairies to Regina on Sunday night to honour missing and murdered indigenous women and girls through song and dance.

The first annual Round Dance for Saskatchewan Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women was organized by the family of Danita Faith Bigeagle, who has been missing since Feb. 11, 2007.

Danita's mother Dianne Bigeagle said her "daughter wasn't a statistic."

"She was a human being, a mother, a daughter — maybe an inquiry will make everybody get it," Dianne said.

"Like, I want my daughter back. Even if it's her body, I want her back in the worst way. I can't live like this. With this round dance, it's just like I'm doing something for her."

Danita is the youngest of six children and a member of the Ocean Man First Nation. She was a mother of two children, Cassidy and Talon, and only 22-years-old when she disappeared from Regina.





Dianne said she doesn't know what happened to her daughter, but she feels like police have stopped looking.

"When I talk to other mothers who have girls missing, their situation is the same," she said. "They are being treated the same, like our daughters are not important or they didn't exist."

Dianne organized the round dance because she wanted to remind people that her daughter, and the other indigenous women who have gone missing or have been murdered, did exist and are important. She mentioned the gathering to families at the pre-inquiry meeting with federal ministers in Regina last week and soon was given pictures of other missing girls.

"We are doing it to honour all, not just my own daughter, because we know how they feel, we know pain, there is lots of pain involved here," she said.

According to Dianne, it was also a gathering for hope and solidarity. She said in indigenous culture round dances are essential to healing and they allow families to speak with their loved ones through prayer.

"The round dance tonight is to honour and respect our girls. We are going to pray and smudge and have a feast for them. All 1,100 of them," Dianne said.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatchewan/round-dance-for-mmiw-in-saskatchewan-1.3448322>

## **Murder suspected in deaths of thousands of Canadian aboriginal women: minister**

February 16, 2016 3:06 PM

---



A stop sign in French and Innu is seen in Nutashkuan, Quebec, Canada (AFP Photo/Guillaume Lavallée)

Ottawa (AFP) - Canada's minister of indigenous affairs Tuesday accused police of failing to investigate possibly thousands of murders of native women that their families say were wrongly classified as suicide, accidental death or by natural cause.

Federal police said 1,049 aboriginal women had been murdered and 172 went missing over the past three decades, in a 2014 report that was updated last year.

But Minister Carolyn Bennett said, "the tragedy is much wider."

One woman's group suggested the number was as high as 4,000.

Based on conversations with victims' families ahead of a public inquiry into the deaths and missing persons cases, Bennett said a number of cases were labeled suicides, or the result of accidental overdose or natural causes.

"There's no question that the families want certain cases reopened," she said.

Many families, the minister added, alleged an "uneven application of justice, from the quality of the search to whether it's called a murder or not, to the charges that are laid, to the plea bargaining, to the court dates being delayed, to the sentence, to the time served.

"It seems to the families that this is very different if the victim is indigenous."

Bennett cited examples of a woman being shot in the back of the head and another who died while her hands were tied behind her back.

Both deaths were classified as suicides, she said.

"It's very important that we're describing a tragedy, not just counting missing and murdered because that doesn't describe the reality of these families and the voices of the survivors," she said.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's Liberal government has sought a rapprochement with Canada's 1.4 million aboriginals since taking office in November.

The previous Tory administration had long resisted calls for an inquiry, seeing the disproportionate number of deaths and disappearances as resulting from domestic violence.

**Direct Link:** <http://news.yahoo.com/murder-suspected-deaths-thousands-canadian-aboriginal-women-minister-200657775.html>

## **Confusion reigns over number of missing, murdered indigenous women**

**RCMP said 1,017 indigenous women were killed between 1980 and 2012, activists say it's closer to 4,000**

By John Paul Tasker, CBC News Posted: Feb 16, 2016 2:47 PM ET Last Updated: Feb 17, 2016 3:09 PM ET



Canada's minister for the status of women suggests the number of missing and murdered indigenous women could be as high as 4,000, but a dearth of hard data means it's all but impossible to pinpoint an accurate figure.

Patty Hajdu told reporters Tuesday that the government doesn't have an exact number, but pointed to research from the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) that puts it at 4,000, much higher than a figure near 1,200 the RCMP has previously stated.

The comment comes after Hajdu and Carolyn Bennett, the minister for indigenous affairs and northern development, wrapped up cross-country talks Monday ahead of a formal national inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women.

Activists working for the Walk 4 Justice initiative started collecting the names of indigenous women who are missing or murdered — they stopped counting when they got to 4,232.

Dawn Lavell-Harvard, the president of NWAC, said the names of those women were shared with her organization and Chuck Strahl, the former Conservative minister of Indian affairs and northern development. No further action was taken at the time.

Lavell-Harvard said the anecdotal evidence was also shared with the Liberal cabinet ministers during the recent pre-inquiry talks.

However, when CBC News contacted one of the activists who supplied NWAC with the information, she said "roughly 60 to 70 per cent" of the 4,000 or so people on her list were indigenous.

Gladys Radek, co-founder of Walk 4 Justice, said her group collected the names while speaking to people during a trek across Canada in 2008. They stopped collecting information in 2011.

NWAC said the confusion around the number emphasizes the need for clear data on this issue. "Lives are too important to rely on an informal database," Lavell-Harvard said.

"The gulf between 1,200 and pushing 4,000 is huge. Even if it is somewhere in the middle, it is still an outrageous number to [not have been investigated] until this point. I think that's why it's so important that this inquiry happen," she said.

## **RCMP figure in doubt**

A 2014 report by the RCMP concluded 1,017 aboriginal women had been slain between 1980 and 2012, and that another 164 were considered missing.

Hajdu, who represents Thunder Bay–Superior North, said the 4,000 number is more believable because there is a history of police underreporting homicides, or failing to investigate suspicious deaths.

"When you actually start to add in, you know, disputed cases, for example, people that have claimed it's a suicide or death due to exposure, but in fact there's symptoms or signs that maybe it wasn't, then of course the numbers jump," Hajdu said ahead of a Liberal cabinet meeting.

Bennett, for her part, would not speculate, but has said that the number is "way, way higher," than the RCMP's 1,200 figure.

"I don't have the data, but I know the problem is not about us fighting about the numbers. The problem is making sure that these families that lost a loved one, these survivors that are still living, that their stories lead us to the kind of concrete actions that will actually put an end to their vulnerability and what has been going on," Bennett said Tuesday.

The minister said the RCMP "did their very best" in trying to come up with an accurate number, but she said the testimony she heard at the pre-inquiry talks puts that figure in serious doubt.



Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Carolyn Bennett says the number of missing and murdered indigenous women is 'way, way higher' than the approximately 1,200 documented by the RCMP in a 2014 report. (Adrian Wyld/Canadian Press)

"We have heard enough stories to hear that if you count these deaths, that were called a suicide or other things, we have anecdotal evidence that the problem is greater," she said. "I think it's important we look to the root causes."

Lavell-Harvard said the RCMP's number is incomplete because of a history of mistrust between the police and indigenous communities.

"Part of the challenge comes from the fact that very often many families, because of negative interactions in the past, because of racism, have not in fact reported when a loved one goes missing," she said in an interview with CBC News on Monday. "There's a lack of willingness to trust police forces and to come forward."

## **Dust off cold cases, families urge**

Bennett said many families of missing or murdered indigenous women want police to dust off cold cases, or actually launch investigations.

"The families want certain cases reopened, we heard that coast to coast to coast. But there's also the common theme of the uneven application of justice, from the quality of the search to whether it's called a murder or not, to the charges that are laid, to the plea bargaining ... it seems to the families that this is very different if the victim is indigenous," Bennett said.

"What the families would say is that a lot of these cases were never opened in the first place because there was never an investigation ... time and time again the family will tell you that the file is empty. There was no investigation."

Lavell-Harvard said finding justice for indigenous families will be at the heart of a national inquiry.

"If there has been [police] misconduct, then it needs to be addressed," she said.

"That is going to be absolutely central to reopening some of these cold cases that have been sitting for many, many years. If we find there wasn't an adequate investigation in the first place, then those need to be looked at; our women deserve that much," she said.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/mmiw-4000-hajdu-1.3450237>

## Canada To Launch Nationwide Investigation Into Murdered, Missing Aboriginal Women

**Updated** February 17, 2016 2:12 PM ET **Published** February 17, 2016 1:45 PM ET

MERRIT KENNEDY



Lita Blacksmith displays a drawing she made of her 18-year-old daughter Lorna, who was murdered in Winnipeg in 2012. A police study found that 1 in 4 female homicide victims in Canada in 2012 was an aboriginal woman.

Canada's government is preparing to launch a major inquiry on murdered or missing aboriginal women.

A 2014 study by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police found that nearly 1,200 aboriginal women were murdered or went missing between 1980 and 2012. But two government ministers involved in planning the investigation say they believe the numbers are actually far higher.

"When you look at the real depth and breadth of this tragedy, it's way bigger than we had thought," Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett said at a news conference with Minister for the Status of Women Patty Hajdu this week in Ottawa.

Dan Karpenchuk in Toronto tells our Newscast unit that "the Minister for the Status of Women says a more realistic number would be 4,000 based on a history of police under-reporting or failing to properly investigate cases of missing native women."

Hajdu told the CBC that the estimate of 4,000 is based on research from the Native Women's Association of Canada.

Referring to the 2014 study, Hajdu said the mounted police "were only looking at very specific parameters." She said some of the cases left off are disputed cases or involve cases deemed to be "a suicide or a death due to exposure but in fact there are signs or symptoms that it wasn't."

Bennett said Monday that "we've heard somebody shot in the back of the head called a suicide. I think people do want to know what happened, that all of a sudden there's no investigation because it was designated some natural causes, or overdose, or suicide, or an accident."

She added that the numbers in the study don't include survivors of an attack or women who escaped abduction.

And Former Minister of Aboriginal Affairs Chuck Strahl told The Globe and Mail that some cases happen in remote areas, making them less likely to be reported. He added: "Sometimes people don't trust local authorities, whether the police or ... local First Nations authorities."

According to the police study, aboriginal women make up about 4 percent of Canada's female population. But they represent nearly 1 in 4 female homicide victims in Canada, based on 2012 numbers.

Hajdu and Bennett spoke to reporters Monday after completing cross-country consultations with thousands of people to develop the scope of the national inquiry.

Among the issues that they're considering: Who to lead the inquiry, what do to about cold cases, and how to incorporate aboriginal traditions. Also under discussion is how to handle these sensitive issues without further traumatizing surviving family members.

Canada's newly elected prime minister, Justin Trudeau, vowed during his campaign to launch the inquiry immediately "as part of his bid to establish a new 'nation to nation' relationship with indigenous peoples," the CBC reports.

Before Trudeau's electoral victory, his predecessors in "the Conservative government had long dismissed calls for a national inquiry, with prime minister Stephen Harper asserting the deaths and disappearances are not part of a 'sociological phenomenon,' " *the Globe and Mail* reports.

A recent Toronto Star investigation suggests there is no clear profile for killers of aboriginal women.

"Half of the victims were domestically related to the perpetrator," but "16 per cent of the offenders were acquaintances; 15 per cent were strangers; and 13 per cent serial killers," the newspaper investigation found.



On Valentine's Day, vigils were held across Canada to remember missing or murdered aboriginal women. One of the memorials was in front of Toronto police headquarters, AJ+ reports:

The demonstrators there highlighted the case of Bella Laboucan-McLean, who fell 31 floors to her death in downtown Toronto in 2013. She was 25.

AJ+ reports: "Her death is still listed as suspicious and unsolved and open to this day," says her sister Melina. "What I really hope that the inquiry ... will look at the colonial and systemic roots — the root issues of the murdered and missing indigenous women issue — but also it will look at how police are complicit in the high rates of unsolved cases across this country."

Concern that police are not adequately investigating these cases is a regular complaint, Bennett said at Monday's news conference. She said that during her cross-country trip, one family told her "that when the loved one was listed as Caucasian, they decided not to correct it in case the search or the investigation wouldn't be as good."

**Direct Link:** <http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2016/02/17/467055203/canada-to-launch-nationwide-investigation-into-murdered-missing-aboriginal-women>

## Missing and murdered indigenous women in Canada could number 4,000

Talks with indigenous communities before an inquiry into the missing and murdered women suggest figure is much higher than police estimate of 1,200



The Native Womens Association of Canada has been calling for an end to violence against indigenous women.

**Guardian staff**

Wednesday 17 February 2016 03.50 GMT  
Last modified on Thursday 18 February 2016 14.19 GMT



A Canadian government minister has suggested that as many as 4,000 indigenous women have gone missing or been murdered over the past three decades.

Patricia Hajdu, minister for the status of women, said research from the Native Women's Association of Canada put the figure much higher than the 1,200 mentioned in a 2014 report by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP).

Earlier, the indigenous affairs minister, Carolyn Bennett, said indigenous communities told ministers in the run-up to an inquiry about the missing women that the number was "much higher than 1,200".

Bennett said the RCMP "did their very best" in trying to come up with an accurate number but the testimony she heard put that figure in serious doubt.

"I don't have the data, but I know the problem is not about us fighting about the numbers. The problem is making sure that these families that lost a loved one, these survivors that are still living, that their stories lead us to the kind of concrete actions that will actually put an end to their vulnerability and what has been going on," she said.

Bennett said many families of missing or murdered indigenous women wanted police to dust off cold cases, or launch investigations into the fate of the missing.

Hajdu said a lack of hard data made it almost impossible to reach an accurate figure but 4,000 could be correct because of a history of police underreporting murders or failing to investigate suspicious deaths.

"When you actually start to add in, you know, disputed cases, for example, people that have claimed it's a suicide or death due to exposure, but in fact there's symptoms or signs that maybe it wasn't, then of course the numbers jump," she said.

The ministers made their comments following cross-country talks held in the run-up to a formal national inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women.

CBC reported that activists with the Walk 4 Justice initiative had collected at least 4,232 names of missing or murdered indigenous women.

Canada's prime minister, Justin Trudeau, has made the issue a priority since winning office in 2015.

He announced the long-awaited national inquiry in December, promising a "total renewal" of the country's relationship with its aboriginal population.

Activists, aboriginal leaders and many victims' families have been calling for a national inquiry for more than five years – a move that was resisted by Trudeau's conservative predecessor, Stephen Harper.

“The victims deserve justice, their families an opportunity to heal and to be heard,” Trudeau said. “We must work together to put an end to this ongoing tragedy.”

At the time, the justice minister, Jody Wilson-Raybould, said the government would spend two months consulting victims’ families and aboriginal leaders to gather their views on the design, scope and parameters of the full inquiry, expected to begin sometime in early 2016.

“No inquiry can undo what happened nor can it restore what was lost, but it can help us find a way forward,” she said.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/feb/17/missing-and-murdered-indigenous-women-in-canada-could-number-4000>

## **Canadian Police May Have Greatly Underestimated How Many Indigenous Women Are Missing Or Dead**

New numbers are more than three times higher than the force's initial counts.

02/17/2016 06:44 pm ET | **Updated** 3 hours ago

The number of indigenous women who have disappeared or been killed in Canada may be much larger than previously estimated, officials said this week.

Research from the Native Women’s Association of Canada documented about 3,000 more cases than the Royal Canadian Mounted Police reported in 2014, Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett said on Monday.

Vancouver-based initiative Walk4Justice compiled a list -- which the NWAC acquired -- of 4,232 indigenous women who have been killed or have gone missing since the 1980s. This figure stands in stark contrast to the RCMP's initial count of 1,181.

"The gulf between 1,200 and pushing 4,000 is huge," NWAC President Dawn Lavell-Harvard told CBC News. She also stressed the importance of instituting a formal database for information about the cases.

The discrepancy between the RCMP and NWAC's findings could partly be due to the fact that some disputed cases weren't properly investigated and were dismissed as suicides or exposure deaths, suggested Patricia Hajdu, Canada's minister for the status of women.

The RCMP has been accused of treating indigenous people unfairly, and even of abusing some.

Human Rights Watch released a report in 2013 detailing stories from indigenous women who said RCMP officers in British Columbia had beaten, pepper-sprayed, strip-searched and assaulted them.

"I understand that there are racists in my police force," RCMP commissioner Bob Paulson told a group of First Nations leaders in December.

"I don't want them to be in my police force," he added, noting that the RCMP has the authority to discipline its officers.

Lavell-Harvard welcomed this admission, saying, "I think it's about time."



Minister Justin Trudeau has promised that his government will conduct a national inquiry into the thousands of cases of missing and murdered indigenous women in Canada.

Indigenous women and girls comprise 4 percent of the nation's female population, but account for 16 percent of all Canadian women killed between 1980 and 2012, according to the Government of Canada's website.

Shortly after his election, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau promised an immediate national inquiry into the murders and disappearances of indigenous women.

Activists had long called for the inquiry, but Canada's former leader, Stephen Harper, opposed the move, arguing the cases were "way past the time for further study."

"For indigenous peoples, life in Canada has not been -- and is not today -- easy, equitable or fair," Trudeau said in December.

During a CBC forum earlier this year, Trudeau answered questions from an indigenous woman whose aunt and cousin had disappeared. He acknowledged that the Canadian government had failed indigenous people for "a long, long time," and said he had a plan to renew the relationship between the government and the indigenous population. When

asked about the RCMP's "inaction" on the issue, Trudeau said changes are needed, "institutionally, right across the board."

**Direct Link:** [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/indigenous-women-canada\\_us\\_56c493b4e4b0b40245c88902](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/indigenous-women-canada_us_56c493b4e4b0b40245c88902)

## Special Topic: Residential Schools, TRC, & '60s Scoop

### Residential school survivor calls for new relationship between Canada and First Nations

By Paul Morden, Sarnia Observer  
Tuesday, February 16, 2016 2:45:24 EST PM



Susie Kicknosway Jones sits at Central United Church on Tuesday February 16, 2016 in Sarnia, Ont., before her presentation during the Central Forum 2016 Speaker Series. Jones, a Walpole Island resident, spoke about her experience of being taken from her home as a young child to attend a residential school. Paul Morden/Sarnia Observer/Postmedia Network

Susie Kicknosway Jones was a four-and-a-half-year-old child when she was taken from her home by the Indian agent at Walpole Island and sent to a residential school 565 kilometres away in Sault Ste. Marie.

Tuesday, the soon to turn 80-year-old brought her story about that dark period in Canada's history to the Central Forum 2016 Speaker Series, at Central United Church in Sarnia.

"I will be saying things about Canada that might not sit well with you," Jones told the audience.

According to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, more than 150,000 First Nations, Metis and Inuit children were sent to residential schools that operated across the country from the 1870s, until the last school closed in 1996.

Jones said she was eight before she was allowed to return home from the school in the summer, and wasn't allowed to leave for good until she was 16.

"I was truly assimilated, and that was the goal of the school," she said.

"But, in my heart I was still an Indian."

Living away from their families, students in the school worked half of the day sewing the clothes they wore, growing the food they ate, and then attended classes for the other half of the day.

"I can't say we received a quality education," she said.

Even today, memories of the watery soup she grew up on at the school cause her to load up the soup she makes in her own kitchen, Jones said.

The commission says that while some former students had positive experiences, many suffered emotional, physical and sexual abuse, and others died while attending residential schools.

Those who died included one of the Jones' older brothers.

She said he was placed in a sick room at the school because of pain in this stomach. Left without care, he died several days later.

"I know they never called a doctor," Jones said.

The commission found that more than 3,000 children died at residential schools, often of causes that could have been prevented.

Jones said she tried her best to follow the rules at the school to avoid getting the strap, or having her hair cut off, which was a common punishment for girls.

Many of the staff at the school were single women who didn't have children, and didn't know how to relate to them or nurture them, Jones said.

"A lot of what we got was negativity, it was fear," she said.

"We were always afraid of being punished."

Some staff at the school had good intentions, Jones said.

"They thought it was their Christian obligation to civilize us," she said.

"The motto at that time, of the government, was to kill the Indian in the child."

After leaving the school as a teenager, she went to Detroit where her mother was living. Jones went on to marry a man who was also from Walpole Island and served for several years in the U.S. military.

She worked in social services in Michigan, raised six children, and retired at age 55. Soon after, Jones served on the school board at Walpole Island, and was then appointed to the Lambton Kent District School Board.

Jones said that was when she realized many people involved in the education system knew little or nothing about Canada's history of residential schools.

Some 550 children from Walpole Island were sent to residential schools outside of the community between 1873 and 1960, Jones said.

Today, only 82 residential school survivors are left at Walpole Island, she said.

Some four generations there were directly impacted, but the effects are still being felt by the children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren of those who attended residential schools, Jones said.

"I saw it took seven generations to get here, it will be at least seven to get out of this mess we're in," she said.

Jones said she speaks often about her experiences, motivated by the ignorance Canadians have of residential schools, and the failure of the government to ensure that history is taught in schools.

"We're trying to change that, now," she said.

Jones said she believes Canada and the First Nations need to start an entirely new relationship, "and have you honour who we are, and we'll honour who you are."

**Direct Link:** <http://www.theobserver.ca/2016/02/16/residential-school-survivor-calls-for-new-relationship-between-canada-and-first-nations>

## **Special Topic: International Indigenous Populations**

### **Your assumptions about Native Americans and alcohol are wrong**

That widely held assumption that Native Americans drink way more than other groups?

Not really accurate, according to a study published this week in the journal Drug and Alcohol Dependence. Researchers found that Native Americans are more likely than white counterparts to abstain from alcohol altogether, and the two groups had comparable rates of heavy and binge drinking.

Such findings “allow us to get rid of the stereotype of ‘the drunken Indian’ that has persisted for several decades in the media and in general public thought,” said co-author Teshia Solomon, director of the University of Arizona’s Native American Research and Training Center.

The stereotype that can affect everything from a Native American’s job prospects to the kind of diagnosis a doctor gives, said lead author Jim Cunningham, a social epidemiologist.

The University of Arizona researchers set out to investigate the disparities in alcohol-related health consequences among Native Americans, particularly reported cases of alcoholic liver disease, Cunningham said.

“There have been excellent studies at a small level” that painted a picture of drinking rates, he said, but “there hasn’t been an in-depth study on American Indians and alcohol use, as a total population.”

So they wanted to get a better sense of what’s behind these reported health disparities.

For this research, the team turned to two massive surveys. The National Survey on Drug Use and Health, spanning 2009 to 2013, included data from more than 4,000 Native Americans and 170,000 whites. The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System survey, conducted between 2011 and 2013, covered more than 21,000 Native Americans and 1 million whites.

Here’s what the researchers found, after adjusting for factors such as income and education levels: About 17 percent of whites and Native Americans were binge drinkers, meaning they consume more than four drinks on a given day. Rates of heavy drinking — sustained binge-drinking — were also comparable: About 8.3 percent of Native Americans and 7.5 percent of whites.

When it came to abstaining from alcohol, 60 percent of Native Americans didn’t have a drink during the previous month, compared to 43 percent of whites.

The data show “you have to take a more complex view if you’re looking at health disparities,” Cunningham said.

“People often assume consequences are the same as use, and they’re not,” Cunningham said.

Native Americans may be more vulnerable to the risks associated with drinking because of other issues, including a lack of access to health care, safe housing and clean water.

Given that the researchers didn't find a major difference in drinking patterns, they want to dig deeper into liver disease rates among Native Americans.

"If you're looking at one cause and it's another cause, you're missing the true issue," Solomon said. "If it's attributed to alcohol versus hepatitis C, or looking at diabetes or obesity or some other issue that may be causing it, you can't intercept and do the right form of treatment."

Regardless of a person's identity, alcoholism is a serious problem that affects all populations, Solomon said, adding: "The treatment that's offered should be effective for that population, and that individual. In regards to Native American populations, we think it's important that culture be a key component of the healing for alcoholism and other diseases."

Respondents in the National Survey on Drug Use and Health answered questions on a computer while the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System survey was conducted by telephone.

**Direct Link:** <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-nation/wp/2016/02/12/your-assumptions-about-native-americans-and-alcohol-are-wrong/>

## **Influential Native American novel picked for reading program**

Posted: Thursday, February 11, 2016 4:43 pm | *Updated: 5:06 pm, Thu Feb 11, 2016.*

**Associated Press |**

FORT SMITH, Ark. (AP) — A Pulitzer Prize-winning novel that helped launch a Native American literary movement has been picked for a community book read sponsored by the University of Arkansas-Fort Smith.

The school announced Thursday that N. Scott Momaday's "House Made of Dawn" is this year's Read This! selection for the program designed to promote literature to the Fort Smith region.

Several events centered around the 1968 book will celebrate Native American culture. Events include the showing of the film, "The Cherokee Word for Water," about the first female chief of the Oklahoma-based Cherokee Nation.

The celebration will conclude with a March 15 visit by Momaday.

Previous books selected for the program include "The Joy Luck Club" by Amy Tan, "The Things They Carried" by Tim O'Brien and "The Sunflower" by Simon Wiesenthal.

**Direct Link:** [http://www.pressofatlanticcity.com/influential-native-american-novel-picked-for-reading-program/article\\_9e5cdda9-5e35-538a-aeb2-dbcab844d8dd.html](http://www.pressofatlanticcity.com/influential-native-american-novel-picked-for-reading-program/article_9e5cdda9-5e35-538a-aeb2-dbcab844d8dd.html)

## **Native American artists break down stereotypes**

By [Cali Nash/Arizona Sonora News Service](#) on Feb 11, 2016 |





Will Wilson's exhibit at the Amerind Foundation. Photo by Cali Nash/Arizona Sonora News Service

Consider the ubiquitous sepia portrait of an American Indian, donned in an elaborate headdress, embodying a kind of displaced dignity. This image irks Will Wilson.

The stereotypical depiction dates back to Edward S. Curtis, the celebrated photographer of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Curtis created an extensive body of photos intended to portray Native Americans as they actually were. Yet his sentimentalized lens captured the fantasy of Americans and arguably served to further displace indigenous cultures from the norm. Wilson, an indigenous photographer, combats this romanticism with his own collection of Native American portraits. His work subverts stereotypes, yet as a contemporary indigenous artist, Wilson himself defies stereotypes of the types of artwork that Native Americans “should” produce.

He is part of a larger group of native artists that rejects the frozen ideals of Native American art as painted clay pots and vibrant beadwork. These artists work within the contemporary medium to create art that is both modern and relevant to their experiences. Wilson says he seeks to “supplant Curtis’s Settler gaze” with a contemporary vision of Native North America. His photos mimic the infamous sepia headshots but cast their gaze on modern subjects.

His exhibit, “Toward a Critical Indigenous Photographic Exchange,” is featured in the gallery at the Amerind Foundation, a hub for art and research in Texas Canyon dedicated to the increased understanding of native peoples in the United States.



Will Wilson self-portrait. Photo by Will Wilson/Arizona Sonora News Service

The Amerind Foundation began to incorporate contemporary artwork into its museum, alongside its historic indigenous artifacts, in the early 2000s, says Eric Kaldahl, the foundation’s deputy director and chief curator.

Kaldahl says the museum did not want visitors to leave with only the impression that “native cultures are of the past, rather than of the present, with vibrant communities and issues that they’re tackling.” So the foundation established the Fulton-Hayden

Memorial Art Gallery, which features rotating contemporary exhibits, to provide more context for museum-goers.

Since its establishment, Kaldahl says the contemporary exhibits have evoked the greatest reaction from visitors who don't necessarily interact with native peoples and have limited knowledge of their current lifestyles. As the curator, Kaldahl says he tries to include a diverse range of indigenous artists, styles and subjects to better expose visitors to multiple native perspectives.

Glory Tacheenie-Campoy, a Tucson-based contemporary indigenous artist, strongly believes that museums should house diverse styles and not just those that are traditional. Her artwork, which has been shown at the Amerind Foundation, is abstract.

Although artists like Tacheenie-Campoy and Wilson choose to incorporate Native American themes into their work, Tacheenie-Campoy says the art market often demands that indigenous artists make art in known indigenous styles or that pertains to Native American culture.

Tacheenie-Campoy says not all of her work has Native American aspects, but when it does, it's often subtle. She can start with a geometric pattern found in a traditional woven rug and abstract it so that her artwork features indigenous culture, without reproducing stereotypical images of women and rugs.

This diverse style subtly can work against her in the competitive art world. Tacheenie-Campoy says that because there is always a demand for authentic indigenous art, she believes indigenous artists who fit that category are better able to sell and make a living off of their work.

Places such as Santa Fe, New Mexico, where Wilson is based, are renown for their authentic indigenous art. Tacheenie-Campoy explains that there's a separate market for ignorant consumers, usually tourists, who have little understanding of the art's tradition or context but nonetheless want it. Mass-produced, inauthentic and cheap renderings of traditional art fill this niche and exploit the culture it comes from, she says.

Many museums, including the Amerind Foundation, now have stores that sell authentic indigenous arts and crafts and books on the history and present of Native American cultures to meet the market's demand on their own terms.



Portraits featured in "Toward A Critical Indigenous Photographic Exchange." Photo by Cali Nash/Arizona Sonora News Service

Wilson, too, emphasizes the importance of agency in his photo exchange. Wilson says the subject's active involvement in the portrait is key to creating a photographic dialogue centered on the recreation of American Indians' contemporary presence.

He intends the dialogue to disrupt the assumed power of the photograph to be objective, and capture rather than construct. This acknowledged subjectivity displaces Curtis' implied objectivity.

The studio portrait is a powerful tool Wilson uses to create a link between the photograph's ritualistic quality and the historical representation of American Indians. Wilson describes the portrait process as an intimate experience, with each image containing its own narrative. Ultimately, Wilson hopes his body of photos will "add a layer to how people think about Indians."

Wilson will be joining two other featured artists at the Amerind Foundation on March 5 for a gallery talk. He'll discuss his photo exhibit in greater depth with visitors, and also will demonstrate the photographic process he uses by taking several portraits of volunteers.

*Cali Nash is a reporter for Arizona Sonora News, a service from the School of Journalism with the University of Arizona. Contact her at [cnash@email.arizona.edu](mailto:cnash@email.arizona.edu).*

**Direct Link:** <http://arizonasonoranewsservice.com/native-americans-artists-break-down-stereotypes/>

## **Native American votes matter in an election year**

**By Lailani Upham**



Carol Williams, former Montana Rep. (D), was the first woman to hold a position of the Majority Leader in Montana history. She is founder of "Carol's List" an organization that recruits, trains, elects, and supports pro-choice Democratic women in a path to elected office. Williams said she never intended to name an organization after herself, it just came about while doing the groundwork to support women to run for office, she said. (Lailani Upham photo)

PABLO — Carol's List, an organization aimed at helping women's influence and power in the political arena, and Montana Native Vote, an organization helping Native political candidates, hosted a community conversation last Thursday night at Salish Kootenai College to engage community leaders, elected officials and local residents in a discussion about issues and politics that affect the local areas.

Guest speaker and former Montana Senator Pat Williams, opened the "conversation" by remembering his friendship and admiration of the late Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribe's leader, "Mickey" Pablo.

Williams said of Pablo, "He was an excellent leader of your people during my time in Congress and afterwards."

Williams expressed, "like many, I still miss him."

He added with a smile, "I could count on him coming to Washington D.C. with jokes and real wisdom."

Williams said in the 18 years working in Congress he worked with Native people and learned a lot even after the congressional service was done.

"It's been almost 40 years," he said.

He raved the lifetime work of Joe McDonald, former Salish Kootenai College President and founder.

"In the last 35 years, through Joe and others Native communities have seen a increase in graduation rates and decrease in drop out rates," Williams said.

There has been more progress in this ethnic group than any others across the America he said.



Pat Williams, former Montana Congressman, shares his knowledge on the power of Native voters. (Lailani Upham photo)

He acknowledged that the Native vote was extremely powerful - not only in the state, but in the nation.

"There are three ways Native Americans can gain serious power," he said: economics, elections, and education.

He preached education.

“Without it, the economy can’t work,” he said.

With education in Native America, Williams said, “It only gets better each decade.”

But it’s not fast enough, he added.

He empowered folks in Indian Country to run for public office, get elected and vote.

As an example, he pointed out that three Glacier County commission officials are Native Americans. He thanked Mike DesRosier, Glacier County Commission Chair for being present at the talk.

He told a story of when President Bill Clinton was first elected into office. Williams said ten days after Clinton took office he was invited to his office with other state congress officials and was taken by surprise when Clinton pointed out Williams. “ ‘You all know Pat Williams, he brought in big vote registration turnout drives in Montana,’ ” Clinton allegedly said.

Williams said Clinton noted that the power in the Native vote not only helped Williams in his election, but his as well.

Williams told the crowd that Clinton told the others that had Williams not gained the Native vote he wouldn’t have won.

CSKT Tribal Council Rep. Shelly Fyant said, “I would like to see the tribes develop a long-term strategy to ‘Keep the fires burning’ as Amy Stiffarm TallBull so eloquently stated. We attempt to ‘get out the vote’ every two/four year cycle, but what’s really lacking, in my mind, is the sustained interest and motivation to stay involved in the overall process.”

Fyant said, “We need to keep all of our elected officials accountable including the tribal council, county officials, as well as state and national elected officials.”



Several community leaders and residents join Carol’s List and Montana Native Vote organizers to discuss strategies to empower Native and women voters in the upcoming election Thursday night at Salish Kootenai College Camas Room. (Lailani Upham photo)

“As individuals, we have that right and need to take the responsibility to make our voices heard,” she said.

Fyant urges tribal folks to call, email, and write to elected officials on their community concerns and issues.

Some questions Fyant says should be asked to oneself is: Do you vote in tribal elections? Or do you feel your vote doesn't count or that your district representative is accessible or listens to your concerns?

According to Fyant, there is not a huge turnout in tribal elections.

"There is a process and we should be actively involved in that process. The Montana Budget and Policy Center hosted an event I attended last year and we could replicate that workshop here on the reservation to educate individuals on how to engage in this process on a tribal/county/state/national level. As a sovereign nation, we need to take collective action so that when the 'Flathead Nation' speaks, the counties, the State of Montana and the United States listen."

Native Vote Director Rhonda Whiting said she was pleased to see such a diverse attendance.

"We plan on convening meetings to organize around issues in the community and use our strengths to find solutions," said Whiting.

Host speaker Anna Whiting Sorrell said she is committed to ensure there is an "Indian voice at the table where decisions are made across the state."

"It is time that our involvement in politics is more than voting, but ensuring those seeking our votes have earned them by supporting, promoting and moving our agenda forward," she said.

"We need to put a marker in the sand in this election," said Whiting Sorrell.

**Direct Link:**

[http://www.charkoosta.com/2016/2016\\_02\\_11/Native\\_votes\\_community\\_conversation.html](http://www.charkoosta.com/2016/2016_02_11/Native_votes_community_conversation.html)

## **Does #OscarsSoWhite Controversy Overlook Diversity in 'The Revenant'?**

**MOVIES** | By **Beatrice Verhoeven** on February 12, 2016 @ 6:08 am [Follow @bverhoev](#)





### **Native American advocates say Leonardo DiCaprio's film is a watershed for minorities in film, but is ignored amid the Hollywood diversity debate**

In a year when “The Revenant” is a leading Academy Award contender for Best Picture, its rare, authentic glimpse into Native American culture has been overshadowed by protests over the Oscars’ lack of diversity.

The irony is not lost on filmmaker and comedian Sterlin Harjo, who joked this week on NPR that “our adopted brother, Leo DiCaprio, is about to get an Oscar for a film that had Native people in it, actually speaking Native languages, and now there’s a call for boycott. Come on. Just give us this one.”

Native Americans are rarely portrayed in film the way they were in “The Revenant” — if they’re portrayed at all. Irene Bedard, the voice of “Pocahontas” and “Tree of Life” actress who is of Inupiat, Yupik, Inuit and Cree ancestry, told TheWrap that she’s disappointed with the way the community is usually depicted in film.

“I’m just offended that as far as Native people go today, we have next to no representation in the media,” said Bedard. “We’re the invisible people, and when we get portrayals, they are in the past, and those portrayals are also the stories of us as victims or as savages. We can’t be seen as true human beings.”

And according to Bedard and Harjo, that’s what makes “The Revenant” a watershed for Native Americans in film. Alejandro Iñárritu, the film’s director, placed emphasis on accurately portraying not only the languages spoken by various tribes in the film, but also the clothing and customs of indigenous peoples.

Otherwise, it seems Hollywood is seldom interested in films about American Indians that don’t comport with long-held stereotypes, according to Bedard, Harjo and James Lujan, chair of the Department of Cinematic Arts and Technology at the Institute of Native American Arts in Santa Fe.

“It seems that [‘The Revenant’] is a very fair portrayal of First Nation people, but on the negative side it’s just reinforcing those images of a native person stuck in the 19<sup>th</sup> century,” he said. “You’d be surprised how many people believe that all Indians still live in teepees and wear buckskin.”

“How many times have I been hung in a film? How many times have I portrayed a woman being raped?” Bedard said. “I’m really glad DiCaprio was able to [SPOILER ALERT] protect the woman from being raped [in “The Revenant”], but there are so many other positive stories to tell.”



Actress Lily Gladstone told TheWrap at the Sundance Film Festival, “Being a Native American actress, I can’t tell you how many roles I get submitted for where I’m the one who gets shot in the back or the one in this five minutes or the one who is this trope, this archetype, rather than a person.” But her role in the new film “Certain Women,” also starring **Kristen Stewart**, has her hopeful about the industry.

“For my first breakthrough role, it’s amazing to be stepping into a role where I can say I am playing a woman of color in a leading role,” she said.

Whether that marks the start of a trend remains to be seen, but the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences recently proposed changes that will strive for greater diversity after Oscars voters failed to nominate a single actor or director of color for the second year in a row.

“Was I surprised? No,” said Bedard of the mass snub. “As a member of the invisible people, we are used to being overlooked. I have been nominated for a Golden Globe, but I still have to prove not only that I am a Native American actor, but that I’m an actor.”

“I’ve been in the industry for 20 years; it’s hard to not become cynical, but I take it as a personal challenge that it’s really up to us Native Americans to be more aggressive in telling our stories,” added Lujan.

Bedard thinks the changes proposed by AMPAS represent a step in the right direction, but agrees with Lujan that American Indians need a louder, more assertive voice.

“There’s a lot of work to be done,” she said. “Instead of crying over the injustices, it’s more like, what can we do? That’s what it’s about.”

See more at: <http://www.thewrap.com/the-revenant-oscarssowhite-diversity-overlooked-oscar-academy-awards-hollywood/#.dpuf>

## **Editorial: Some school mascots need rethinking**

Feb 12, 2016

Every school in the nation has a caricature mascot that is paraded around at sports events, but for some it's not comical.

Animals -- bears and birds of prey in particular -- are the preferred choice for many schools. But when the mascot is a caricature of a race or culture, these days it's bound to cause some rankles. Times are changing, and some of the old cherished mascots of the past -- particularly those that represent Native Americans -- are facing growing criticism.

Some say it's political correctness run amok. Others say it's a respectful and appropriate change of course.

That's the conundrum that Pentucket Regional School District faces, and Amesbury High School isn't far behind. Pentucket with its Sachem, and Amesbury with its Indian, are among the dwindling number of schools with Native American-themed mascots. Both school systems have seen criticism over their mascots raised in recent months, and in both cases the administration is giving the issue some thought.

It's a touchy subject. It pits long-held tradition and pride against changing times.

The clock is ticking against mascots like the Sachem and the Indian, regardless of how cherished they may be locally. This is an issue that will need to be settled at some point -- now or later. It may as well be now.

Many schools have chosen to drop their Native American mascots, among them Andover High School and Merrimack College. But Massachusetts still has a large concentration of Native American-themed mascots, no doubt due to the strong historical connection to the region's Native American past. We are surrounded by place names that are Native American words -- Merrimack, Winnacunnet, Pentucket, Agawam, Masconomet, Powow, Attitash, and Winnekenni among them. These names aren't viewed in a negative way; they are vestiges of the long historical reach of the region's native tribes. Each name has a meaning in its native tongue -- Merrimack, for example, means "strong place," thought to be a reference to its strong currents.

But it's something different to go beyond that and generalize the entire race of Native Americans, and that's the issue that arises with generic Native American mascots such as "Indians." When Native American-themed mascots are paraded out at sports events, it's usually a stereotyped image of headdress-wearing, war-whooping, face-painted warriors, a fearsome image. Were someone to claim their mascot as the "Caucasians," it would be interesting to see what kind of a stereotype they'd portray. No doubt many Caucasians would find it ridiculous if not offensive.

And that's the rub.

The underlying problem of course is the historic treatment of Native American tribes by whites. It is such a long and complicated history, but there is one trend that is clear -- from the earliest settlement of New England in the 1600s to the final conquests of the West in the late 1800s, Native American populations were pushed from their lands and their populations scattered and diminished. In most of the conflicts, warfare was carried out in a genocidal method, and in almost every conflict, the native tribes were on the losing end.

Many people feel that the mascots honor Native Americans by portraying qualities such as strength and courage. Others see them as inappropriate caricatures of a conquered and nearly annihilated race. It's a matter of perception.

Our feeling is that the best mascot names capture a sense of the place they represent. The Florida Gators, the North Carolina Tar Heels, the Oklahoma Sooners, and locally the Newburyport Clippers -- these are mascot names that connect well to their region's identity.

This is an excellent discussion to have in our local schools. We hope that both Amesbury and Pentucket will give it adequate attention.

**Direct Link:** [http://www.eagletribune.com/opinion/editorial-some-school-mascots-need-rethinking/article\\_6f33b04a-1112-52c7-a6cc-fb6a9794bd5d.html](http://www.eagletribune.com/opinion/editorial-some-school-mascots-need-rethinking/article_6f33b04a-1112-52c7-a6cc-fb6a9794bd5d.html)

## **Grammy Winner Joanne Shenandoah Needs Liver Transplant**

07:01 AM Monday 2/15/16

*Grammy Award-winning Native American singer-songwriter Joanne Shenandoah needs a new liver after becoming ill with a bacterial infection last summer.*

The 58-year-old Shenandoah, of the Oneida Nation in central New York, tells *The Post-Standard of Syracuse* she has set up a GoFundMe account to help pay for costs associated with the transplant.

Shenandoah says she contracted the infection after a visit to a hospital last June. She says it's spread from her intestines to her kidneys and liver.

Tests at Strong Memorial in Rochester determined that her liver had suffered irreparable damage and required a transplant.



**Joanne Shenandoah**

Shenandoah has received more Native American Music Awards than any other native artist, and more than 40 music awards altogether.

**Direct Link:** [http://www.pollstar.com/news\\_article.aspx?ID=822868](http://www.pollstar.com/news_article.aspx?ID=822868)

## **Native American Leader to Sanders: I'm Tired of Gov't 'Bullshit'**

Published 12 February 2016

During a Black community forum, a Native American activist told Bernie Sanders that the U.S. government must do more for Native communities.

At the Black America Forum, Native American activist Clyde Bellecourt told United States presidential candidate Bernie Sanders that he and his community were “tired of this bullshit!,” as the moderator tried to cut him off while he was asking Sanders as to why why none of the candidates have said “a single word” on the rights of the Natives Americans.

Answering Bellecourt’s question on whether he would honor the treaties between the federal government and the Native American community, Sanders responded: “I will do everything I can do redress that.”

The Minnesota branch of the United States-based Neighborhoods Organizing for Change kicked off Black America Forum Sanders Thursday at 5:30 p.m. local time in the presidential candidate’s latest efforts of reaching out to the Black community in the country.

Sanders kicked off his speech by stressing that the United States has “got some serious problems,” adding that not him or any other president “is gonna be able to solve the problems facing this country alone.”

“The wealth distribution over the last 30 years has gone in the wrong direction” making the top one percent richer and the bottom half of the population poorer, he added.

Speaking on student loans, Sanders said: “Our job living in a competent economy is to encourage all people to get the education they need. Why are we punishing people, forcing them to pay off debt for decades for the crime of getting an education? Give me a break!”

On Black youths being in jails in large numbers, Sanders said that his administration would make sure that people who get out of jails get the right education and potential to not return to prisons. “Our job is to invest to make sure that when people leave incarnation they would have the potential to not return to jail.”

Meanwhile, Sanders stressed that Black people’s right to vote is being compromised due to criminal records. “There is an unbelievable percentage of Black people not being able to vote because of felony charges.”

He said that while white and Black communities consume marijuana at similar rates, Black people were four times more likely to go to prison for it. “If you have a large number of African Americans not being able to vote, somebody benefits from that.”

When asked about investigating Black communities and ending the institutional racism, Sanders told the audience that his government would “target those communities that are the poorest, that have been the poorest for the longest, to make sure that they get the assistance that they need.”

The event started with several activists making opening speeches. “Make some noise,” one speaker told the audience as she sang “I believe we will win.” The event was partly sponsored by the Black Lives Matter movement.

The forum focused on questions of race, economic investment and equity, which are major issues in this campaign. “It’s essentially a conversation about his plan to reinvest in America,” Executive Director Anthony Newby said Thursday.

The event was moved from one location to another in Minneapolis in order to host more people. The old location would have accommodated only 400 people, but the new one in a high school fit up to 1,200 people. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton declined to attend the event.

Newby added that Sanders had “referenced big dollar amounts, trillion dollar figures. We think that’s great, but we want to know specifically what’s his plan to direct those funds to communities that have historically been passed over for those types of investments and, in particular, his plan for the Black community.”

In recent weeks, the independent U.S. senator and self-identified social democrat proved that he is a worthy and dangerous opponent to former first lady Hillary Clinton.

In the Iowa caucus, Clinton secured victory with less than one percent of the votes while almost walking away with the same amount of delegates as Sanders.

Meanwhile, in the New Hampshire primary, Sanders secured a major win with more than a 20-point lead on the former secretary of state. However, the demographics of those states are mostly white and the real test for Sanders will be in the upcoming South Carolina primary, a state where the Black community is an important decider in the democratic primaries.

Blacks in the U.S. have so far thrown their support behind Clinton. The community supports former Secretary of State Clinton by more than a 3-to-1 margin nationwide.

However, among young Blacks between the ages of 18 to 29, that margin shrinks to 46 percent for Clinton versus 33 percent for Sanders, according to recent Reuters/Ipsos polling.

This content was originally published by teleSUR at the following address:  
["http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Native-American-Leader-to-Sanders-Im-Tired-of-Govt-Bullshit-20160212-0027.html"](http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Native-American-Leader-to-Sanders-Im-Tired-of-Govt-Bullshit-20160212-0027.html)

## Native women example for suffragists

**Sarah Taddeo, @sjtaddeo** 6:02 p.m. EST February 12, 2016



Most women look back to the women's suffrage movement in awe of those who first pushed the country toward women's equality, but few know that some suffragists looked to the example of Native American women.

Native culture, embodied by the Haudenosaunee confederacy locally, heavily relied on the women's influence in family and government, and suffragists such as Matilda Joslyn Gage took note in the 1800s and at the turn of the century.

"The suffragists observed a safe environment for women among the Native communities and they were very impressed," said Freida Jacques, an Onondaga Clan Mother and Haudenosaunee woman, in an email. "This was not their experience anywhere in their cities."



**Sally Roesch Wagner, women's right's author and professor.**

Jacques, the Turtle Clan Mother of the Onondaga Nation Council of Chiefs, and Sally Roesch Wagner, an author and pioneer in women's studies, will present this topic

Saturday at the Seneca Art and Culture Center at the Ganondagan State Historic Site in Victor.

Wagner did extensive research on Haudenosaunee women's influence on suffragists, finding that early women's rights activists saw an equality ideal in native culture.

"It is a society that has found the conditions for peace, the conditions for real democracy," she said.

Native clans, or familial structures within the confederacy, were headed by women and passed through the female bloodline to their children, said Jacques. Women also called the shots when it came to raising and monitoring chiefs and other leaders, said Wagner.

"Repeatedly Haudenosaunee men have said to me, 'women are worth twice what men are,' " said Wagner, adding that there was a noted difference between native and European men when it came to abuse against women.

"The sacredness of Mother Earth and the sacredness of women is the basis of this absence of violence against women, and when it did occur, it was treated very harshly," said Wagner.

Wagner found that Gage, a prominent suffragette voice, and others like her had personally observed local native women's role in government and society, and brought that example back to their compatriots at suffragist meetings.

"Gage saw a vision of a world with absolute equality," said Wagner. "She saw (native culture) as a model for creating universal peace, and she said 'It's been done, it works, this is what it looks like.'"

Today, native women are vocal proponents of environmental issues, such as the cleanliness of water and air, as they effect the health of living beings, said Jacques.

Native culture has been largely minimized by mainstream American culture, but equality remains an important cultural tenet, said Wagner.

"Even with the attempts to destroy these cultures, the essence of (these values) still remains," she said. "It was a model for the suffragettes, and it's a model for me today."

*STADDEO@Gannett.com*

## **If You Go**

**What:** A presentation titled "A Sustainable World of Equality and Peace," from Sally Roesch Wagner and Freida Jacques

**When:** 2 p.m. Saturday

**Where:** Seneca Art and Culture Center at Ganondagan State Historic Site, 7000 County Road 41 in Victor



The event is free with museum admission. For more, go to [Ganondagan.org](http://Ganondagan.org).

**Direct Link:** <http://www.democratandchronicle.com/story/news/2016/02/12/native-women-example-suffragettes/80242716/>

## Group to host exhibit on fur traders who influenced North Dakota's past, culture

By [Kevin Bonham](#) on Feb 12, 2016 at 4:24 p.m.

CAVALIER, N.D.—A group of regional history buffs is launching a year-long exhibit and program to recognize fur traders that influenced North Dakota's past and culture.



The Northeastern North Dakota Heritage Association will host an open house for the Metis Exhibit 1 to 5 p.m. Sunday at the Pioneer Heritage Center at Icelandic State Park, located 5 miles west of Cavalier along North Dakota Highway 5, or about 85 miles northwest of Grand Forks.

The exhibit, which includes interpretive history panels and artifacts from the State Historical Society of North Dakota, as well as area residents, is the backdrop to a series of programs that will be held throughout the year that will focus on the Metis culture, its history and regional influence.

"Education is the most important part of what we are going to do," said Corene Vaughn, a retired Pembina County commissioner and heritage association board member who lives on a five-generation farm near Cavalier. "We hope to bring out what an important role the Metis played and our region's history."

The Metis of what is now North Dakota and Manitoba emerged from the fur trade industry in the early 19th Century. They descended from European, mostly French, British and Scottish traders and Indian—mostly Chippewa, or Ojibwe—women.

The Metis were an integral part of the early fur trade industry that used an oxcart trail system between Winnipeg and St. Paul, exchanging buffalo hides and pemmican—buffalo meat—for manufactured goods.



Mary Ellen Kirkeng adjusts Metis flags for display at the Pioneer Heritage Center at Icelandic State Park Wednesday.

The Metis also developed their own culture, incorporating colorful clothing and emphasizing outdoor lifestyles that included fiddle music and what became known as the Red River Jig, a traditional dance of the Metis.

The monthly programs will feature those and other aspects of the Metis story, including panel and book discussions with some descendants of the first Metis in the northern Red River Valley.

"We want to tell the story of what they contributed to our society and how they're still contributing," said Mary Ellen Kirking, a heritage association board member.

The Northeast North Dakota Heritage Association is hosting a year-long exhibit and evolving program at the Pioneer Heritage Center that focuses on the history and culture of the Metis.

Here is the schedule of special events:

Sunday, 1-5 p.m.: Metis Exhibit Open House.

April 17, 2 p.m.: Metis Panel Discussion. Descendants of the original Metis discuss the past, present and the future of the Metis; moderated by Frank White, a UND sociology professor.

May 15, 2 p.m.: Meet 19th Century fur trader George Wendt, impersonated by Harry Holen, for a look back at the fur trading days and oxcart trails.

June 12, 2 p.m. (at Akra Hall): Sunday afternoon at the hall, with performance by the Asham Stompers, dancing the Red River Jig, a traditional dance of the Metis.

July 10-17: Artist in Residency, sponsored by the North Dakota Council on the Arts.

August: New displays featuring Metis clothing.

Sept. 18, 2 p.m.: Book discussion. "Red River Story" and "Lord of the Plains", books on the Metis by Alfred Silver.

October: New displays featuring contemporary and historical Metis.

Nov. 20, 1-5 p.m.: Christmas Open House. Metis Christmas celebration, with sampling of traditional foods.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.grandforksherald.com/news/region/3946878-group-host-exhibit-fur-traders-who-influenced-north-dakotas-past-culture>

## Native American sculpture theme gaining popularity



One of local artist Lucas Stokes' drawings for the proposed statue.

Posted: Sunday, February 14, 2016 12:15 am

**By Bernie Delinski Staff Writer**

TUSCUMBIA — The idea of incorporating a Native American theme into the city's Singing River Sculpture apparently is a popular one.

City officials said they have heard positive feedback since bringing the idea to the public's attention in January.

Mayor Bill Shoemaker has shown City Council members drawings from local artist Lucas Stokes for a statue that would fit that theme. They depict Native Americans playing instruments connected to their culture.

"In comments I've heard from the community, they really like the idea of a Native American sculpture and believe it would be very appropriate," Shoemaker said.

He said he has talked with representatives in the Native American community. They also are pleased with the idea, but said they would prefer the sculpture not play an instrument.

“They want to use a voice instead of instrument, since the voice was the first musical instrument they used,” Shoemaker said.

A location has not been decided, but local merchants said they want it downtown, and in a location that would be safe from vandalism

Shoemaker said a Native American connection would be fitting for several reasons.

The concept of the “Singing River” originated from Native Americans because when shoals were more abundant in the Tennessee River in northwest Alabama, the wind passing along them made a musical sound.

The area became nicknamed the Shoals because of its mussel-packed reputation. The area is known for its highly successful musical connection, so the Singing River and Native American tie-ins could be fitting for a statue, officials said.

Also, Tuscumbia had a reputation for its humane treatment of Native Americans during their stay in the city while they were being forcefully located to Oklahoma in the 1830s as part of the Indian Removal Act. Every September, that is commemorated during the Oka Kapassa — Return to Coldwater — festival in Spring Park.

No action has been taken on the matter, and there is no timeline for a decision.

First, funds must be raised. This is a venture paid for through private donations.

Shoemaker said more than \$20,000 has been collected from the community. It is difficult to gauge how much is needed, because factors such as the artist’s charges and the actual sculpture remain unknown.

Merchants and members of the Tuscumbia Downtown Redevelopment Authority have been in communication with Stokes, and said new sketches soon would be available.

Each of the four largest cities in the Shoals will have an aluminum sculpture to commemorate the area’s musical heritage.

Two statues already are in place. In 2012, a statue of a guitar-strapped man singing into a microphone was unveiled at Love Plaza on Montgomery Avenue in Sheffield.

Celebrated Shoals bassist David Hood posed for the statue that was unveiled in 2014 on Avalon Avenue in Muscle Shoals.

**Direct Link:** [http://www.timesdaily.com/news/local/native-american-sculpture-theme-gaining-popularity/article\\_b1234afb-1d07-51f0-8bcc-f933a00608f8.html](http://www.timesdaily.com/news/local/native-american-sculpture-theme-gaining-popularity/article_b1234afb-1d07-51f0-8bcc-f933a00608f8.html)

## **Bernie Sanders Courts Native American Voters**

By: Jacqueline Keeler

Published 14 February 2016

The commitments Sanders has made to “Indian Country” include expanding and protecting tribal rights to jurisdiction.

Democratic candidate for President Bernie Sanders achieved a historic upset at the New Hampshire primaries last week by winning 60 percent of the delegates. However, this margin is nothing compared to the margin he carried in one precinct in Iowa: the Meskwaki Indian Settlement precinct in Tama County. Here on the 8,000 acre homeland

of the 1,400 member Sac & Fox Tribe of the Mississippi in Iowa he won 83.3 percent of the votes. Clinton only won 16.7 percent.

So it is no surprise when on Feb. 8 Bernie Sanders' campaign announced at the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians meeting the creation of a Native American policy committee to develop and guide Sanders' tribal policy platform. ATNI represents 57 Northwest tribes in a seven-state region. Founded in 1953, the organization provides an opportunity for tribal leaders to work together in the spirit of "inter-tribal unity and cooperation" and to jointly set policy and direction for member tribes. It is regarded as one of the strongest regional Native American organizations in the United States.

Nicole Willis, a member of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla, and the former deputy director of First Americans at Obama for America is the new Native American advisor to the campaign.

"In the area of policy, Native America deserves to be courted," Willis told teleSUR.

She said that the Native American Policy Committee, unique on the campaign trail, will contain a mix of elected officials, experts in Indian policy development and implementation, and regional representatives who will be "delving into rapid, meaningful policy development."

Masha Mendieta, a national strategist for the Sanders campaign who attended the ATNI meeting, was amazed at the speed at which Sanders acted to expand his message to include the Native American community more fully. "Within 24 hours," she says, "I knew I was going to ATNI and had these commitments from him. Amazing."

The main commitments Sanders made to "Indian Country" (as Native Americans often call it) include:

Within 100 days of his presidency Sanders has pledged to convene a climate change summit and to include Native American representation. One of primary issues endangering Native American cultural practices in the 21st century is climate change. For example: climate change greatly endangers the growing of first foods like corn, and the habitats of traditional food sources and the transmission of cultural practices built around them. Sander's opposition to the Keystone XL pipeline will play well with Native voters to whom these projects represent a violation of tribal sovereignty and a grave danger to their homelands. Feelings are so strong on this matter that after the U.S. House of Representatives passed legislation to force the Keystone XL pipeline to move forward in 2014, the Rosebud Sioux Tribe called it an "act of war" in a letter to Congress and said the U.S. lawmakers had "signed our death warrants" and vowed to close their lands to the pipeline.

Affirm and expand Native American nations' gains in the last couple of years. Not just supporting initiatives like Obama's Generation Indigenous but to secure funding for this

programs. “Gen-I” is a program for Native youth that Obama announced at the 2014 White House Tribal Nations Conference to “focus on improving the lives of Native youth by removing the barriers that stand between Native youth and their opportunity to succeed.” Key programs include: education, health and nutrition, juvenile justice, housing, and youth engagement.

Expanding and protecting tribal rights to jurisdiction. Sanders played a key role as the co-sponsor of the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013. The bill was controversial and was bitterly opposed by Republicans because it expanded tribal jurisdiction over non-Indians. Due to a series of Supreme Court rulings, Tribes have been stripped of jurisdiction over non-Indians on their lands and this has created a gap in jurisdiction which has led to an epidemic of predation of Native women by non-Indian men. In 2010, the Justice Department released a report which found that Native women were 2 1/2 times more likely to be victims of rape and murder than other American women. The report also found that over 70 percent of the perpetrators of these crimes against Native women were white men. In some counties in the United States, the murder rate for Native women was found to be 9 times that of other American women. Further compounding the lack of protection for Native women, the FBI refused to prosecute in 70 percent of the cases. VAWA went into effect in 2015 with a few tribal pilot projects. Sanders plans to fight for further expansion of tribal jurisdiction in the next authorization of the bill. In the present version of the bill, tribal jurisdiction is limited to only Domestic Violence perpetrators.

Continue the White House Tribal Nations Conference (an annual conference Obama began shortly after he took office) and retain a Native American policy advisor as begun under Obama’s administration.

“I was given an opportunity to speak at the General Assembly,” Mendieta said, noting she hadn’t come to the ATNI meeting prepared to speak and found herself addressing the gathered leaders, deeply moved by the testimonials and speeches from tribal representatives she had heard. She says she urged them to take this opportunity to elect somebody “who fundamentally supported change” and to seize a “once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to shift their relationship with the federal government.”

Sanders, himself, addressed via prerecorded message the National Congress of American Indians’ conference in November. NCAI is the largest and oldest organization representing over 200 tribes from across the country.

Willis says the campaign will be reaching further into urban American Indian communities where, according to U.S. Census, 78 percent of the Native American population reside. However, she said reservation communities cannot be overlooked. These communities have the proven ability to swing the vote in their districts. In very red states, the reservation counties are often the only blue ones in the entire state.

“An example,” Willis says, “of this would be Senator Tim Johnson’s election in South Dakota. It was a profound operation in South Dakota that brought out the Indian vote and swayed the election. And again in Montana and in 2008. Where there is a large Indian population they can sway entire counties.” She notes that Native American voters have a higher than average voter turnout. In former Senator Johnson’s (D) election he won 94 percent of the vote on the Pine Ridge reservation, home of the state’s largest tribe, the Oglala Lakota Sioux in 2002.

Willis predicts even greater things for the 2016 election because “The field organization and get out the vote push is even more widely known and established on reservations than before 2008.”

This content was originally published by teleSUR at the following address:

["http://www.telesurtv.net/english/opinion/Bernie-Sanders-Courts-Native-American-Voters-20160214-0008.html"](http://www.telesurtv.net/english/opinion/Bernie-Sanders-Courts-Native-American-Voters-20160214-0008.html)

## **Tribe seeks remains of Arapaho children who died at boarding school**

ALEJANDRA SILVA The Riverton Ranger

Updated Feb 14, 2016

RIVERTON — More than a century ago, Native American children were removed from their families and sent to faraway boarding schools. Some of them never returned home.

The Northern Arapaho Tribal Historic Preservation Office is attempting to recover the remains of three Arapaho students who are buried at the Army War College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. The site was home to the Carlisle Indian School from 1879 to 1918.

Horace Washington, Hayes Vanderbilt Friday and Dickens Nor attended the school in the late 1800s, and when they died their bodies were interred in the Carlisle Barracks Cemetery.

“It is our sovereign right and duty to make sure our ancestors are returned home where they belong,” said Yufna Soldier Wolf, director of NATHPO.

Soldier Wolf said her office would seek repatriation of the three children under the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act. The federal law enacted in 1990 requires federal agencies and institutions that receive federal money to return Native American remains and cultural items to their descendants and tribes.



Soldier Wolf said it took the department nine years to find documents that led to the location of the children's remains. Record keeping was poor, and children's names were changed numerous times.

The historic preservation office sent a letter to the Army War College in 2007, after learning Dickens Nor was interred in a cemetery. NATHPO asked that his remains be returned, but Soldier Wolf said the college did not want to "disrupt" the cemetery.

Marcida Eagle Bear, executive director of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe Drug Treatment Program, joined a Jan. 8 meeting in Riverton along with a group of high school students from the South Dakota reservation. Eagle Bear said their tribe was also concerned about deceased children who haven't been returned home.

"I think it's gone on for too long," Eagle Bear said. "We're happy the Arapaho tribe is taking the lead role."

The reason to return the children was clear to the tribe.

"This action of repatriation is more than a movement; it is a healing of tribal wounds created by racism, stereotypes and genocide perpetuated in native communes through trans-generational historic trauma," Soldier Wolf said. "Our tribal communities need to heal."

American Indians were first transported to the school in 1875 for the purpose of learning English and vocations. In the early 20th century the annual enrollment reached 1,000 students representing more than 70 tribes.

Soldier Wolf said a formal request of repatriation of the ancestors will be made on March 1.

**Direct Link:** [http://trib.com/news/state-and-regional/tribe-seeks-remains-of-arapaho-children-who-died-at-boarding/article\\_3e02bf91-c76b-519b-83d3-1b8b9d3c179f.html](http://trib.com/news/state-and-regional/tribe-seeks-remains-of-arapaho-children-who-died-at-boarding/article_3e02bf91-c76b-519b-83d3-1b8b9d3c179f.html)

## **World-Herald editorial: 'Small' press, big impact**



Leonardo DiCaprio in "The Revenant." DiCaprio plays real-life frontiersman Hugh Glass, who communicates mostly through grunts, grimaces and violence after a bear attack and one setback after another.

POSTED: SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2016 1:00 AM

Leonardo DiCaprio is sending some extra business to the University of Nebraska Press (UNP).

Sales of the print and e-book editions of Frederick Manfred's 1954 novel "Lord Grizzly," published by UNP, have surged in recent months, thanks to DiCaprio's movie "The Revenant."

The Manfred novel tells the story of Hugh Glass, a frontiersman who set out on a revenge trek in 1823 after being mauled by a bear in South Dakota and left for dead by companions. The story serves as the basis for "The Revenant," which has received a slew of Oscar nominations.

One national news account referred to UNP as "a small university press," as if it were a boutique enterprise churning out a handful of titles.

On the contrary, the University of Nebraska Press, now marking its 75th anniversary, is one of our country's most respected university presses, publishing 170 new and reprint titles annually and with a total of 3,000 works in print.

UNP is known for top-flight academic and general-audience book series in fields including Native American studies, American Western and Great Plains topics, history and sports. Its authors include three Nobel laureates, a U.S. poet laureate who received a Pulitzer Prize, and two authors in recent years who received the Bancroft Prizes for the top honor in historical studies.

A look at some new releases illustrate UNP's strengths:

- » Nebraska-related titles, including "Lonesome Dreamer: The Life of John G. Neihardt" and "Why I'm an Only Child and Other Slightly Naughty Plains Folktales" by humorist Roger Welsch.

- » Native American studies, including "Ho-Chunk Powwows and the Politics of Tradition."

- » Historical works about the Great Plains, including "The Missouri River Journals of John James Audubon."

- » General history, including "The Dust Rose Like Smoke," which compares the Battle of the Little Bighorn in 1876, where Custer's troops were annihilated by Lakota and Cheyenne warriors, with a similar victory in 1879 by Zulu warriors against British troops in South Africa.

One of the UNP's greatest contributions is its long line of sports-related works, above all, baseball history. Among the new titles are "Hairs vs. Squares," about the 1972 World Series between the Oakland A's and the Cincinnati Reds, and "The Great Baseball Revolt: The Rise and Fall of the 1890 Players League."

UNP provides outstanding studies of the intersections of racial history and sports. A new example is "Greatness in the Shadows: Larry Doby and the Integration of the American League." Another new book — "From Jack Johnson to LeBron James: Sports, Media, and the Color Line" — provides a wide-ranging look at the history of sports writing, race and sports over the past century.

In all these ways, the University of Nebraska Press is making valuable contributions to the intellectual life of our state and our nation.

**Direct Link:** [http://www.omaha.com/opinion/world-herald-editorial-small-press-big-impact/article\\_c938e6a2-4fb4-56d7-be58-5200f4ea882a.html](http://www.omaha.com/opinion/world-herald-editorial-small-press-big-impact/article_c938e6a2-4fb4-56d7-be58-5200f4ea882a.html)

## **Duluth March Honors Indigenous Missing and Murdered Women**

**Taylor Holt**

*Updated: 02/13/2016 10:22 PM*

*Created: 02/13/2016 4:51 PM*

For these women, this day is about more than just a march.

"For me, it's being an indigenous woman, having a history of violence, understanding where the needs are there and being able to advocate for women," said Reneann Goodrich, organizer of the march.

The First Women's Memorial March is an obligation to save the thousands of Native women who go missing and are murdered everyday here and throughout the country.

"It's bigger than we know. There is just no good record keeping done about murdered missing indigenous women," said Patty Larsen, Director of the Sacred Hoop Coalition.

"It has a lot to do with trafficking of American Indian women that's going on right now. That's a huge part of the whole problem."

But they are working to change that starting with awareness and keeping track of those women that go missing.

"It's not just down here but it's up in Canada also. So we're working towards developing different data bases so we can actually get those numbers," said Goodrich.

And they are glad to have the support of the community.

"It's extremely important. A lot of American Indian women are victims of sexual abuse and have gone missing because of it or because of kidnappings. It's important that the public becomes more aware of the issue and protects our women," said Megan Wagner, a social work major at UMD.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, American Indian women are two and a half times more likely to experience sexual assault crimes compared to all other races. Larsen says it is a difficult issue to talk about but there is a need to do just that.

"Get involved. I think we need to organize around a way to keep track of number of people that are missing," said Larsen.

The Native community in Minneapolis will have their 2nd annual march tomorrow in the city.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.wdio.com/article/stories/s4047557.shtml>

# The Groovalottos: Play That Funky (Native American) Music

February 16, 2016



The Groovalottos, from left, Melvin Coombs Jr., Eddie Ray Johnson, Mwalim DaPhunkee Professor.

When The Groovalottos take the stage serving up a blend of soul, funk and blues, they're not just entertaining their fans and packing the dance floor, they're also on a mission to share the spirit and soul of the music they play that has deep roots in their Native American ancestral traditions.

The band includes members of the Choctaw and Wampanoag communities and they have been referred to as the 'Soul-Funk Song Keepers of Native America'. The group is comprised Mwalim DaPhunkee Professor on keyboards and vocals, Eddie Ray Johnson on drums and vocals and Melvin "MEL" Coombs on bass.

When you speak of tradition, people often think of very old customs and beliefs that have been passed on through generations, that in many cases have lost their importance in contemporary culture. But for multimedia artist and band leader Mwalim, tradition is not something that is complete and set in stone. Tradition is a dynamic and ever-evolving legacy that should influence contemporary ideas with continued relevance.

The blues is a musical genre that developed in the deep south of the United States in the 19th century and it's influence can be seen in many musical forms that followed including jazz, funk, soul, rhythm and blues and rock 'n' roll. But according to Mwalim, also known as Morgan James Peters, a tenured professor at the University of Massachusetts, the blues has origins in Native American music as well.

In a paper he contributed to the Smithsonian's 'Indivisible' exhibit in 2009 titled, 'They Heard it in the Fields', Mwalim points out that in addition to the already acknowledged rhythmic and harmonic influences on the blues, brought to America from Africa as part of the cultural traditions of enslaved blacks, the melodies in blues songs show strong similarity to the melodies of Native American chants and songs.

As a Mashpee Wampanoag with black heritage, preserving and continuing tradition is a philosophy that permeates Mwalim's diverse body of multimedia work. From creating

films and poetry, to storytelling, from his plays based on historical events, to his award-winning original music he is evolving his own new and more inclusive authentically American traditions.



Mwalim DaPhunkee Professor accepts an Urban Music Award

Influenced by Native American culture through his father's side of the family as well as his opera singer mother's roots in Barbados, Mwalim has found ways to creatively bring many traditions together. Spending summers in Mashpee and the other months in New York City, he developed work that he referred to as a "little too rural to be urban and a little too urban to be rural" and that outsider/insider perspective permeates his creative style resulting in a unique artistic voice that reflects those diverse experiences.

The Groovalottos' music is just one current example of Mwalim's body of work and the band recently released a single 'Do You Mind...' from their upcoming album "Ask Yo Mama." The accompanying video has already received over 85,000 views on YouTube. The full album of 13 songs is expected to be completed by summer before the group heads to Senegal, touring the country for two weeks for a musical cultural exchange program.

Mwalim got the idea for the song "Do You Mind" while playing a performance in a local club. The band noticed that all the men in the club were gathered around the televisions watching a football game while their wives and girlfriends were enjoying the dance floor. Looking out at the dancers he remembered a classic line from the movie "Animal House", "do you mind if we dance with your dates?" He quickly improvised some lyrics based on the line during a blues jam and by the time the band returned home from the gig, the song was complete.

In addition to creating new traditions, Mwalim also honors the musical roots that give him inspiration. He created a company, Songkeepers Ltd. which preserves and passes on traditional Native American musical influences as well as celebrates contemporary Native contributions.



Eddie Ray leading a workshop for young, aspiring drummers.

Songkeepers is currently spearheading a program at Mashpee Middle School providing a weekly after -chool jazz band program for students to supplement their in-school music classes. The program also serves as a type of apprenticeship opportunity, offering the chance for students to play with and learn from established professional musicians.

Mwalim remembers the influence of good teachers when he was young and the impact they can make on students. He himself was a creative child, studying music and writing, folklore, poetry and storytelling. It was his viola playing though that first brought him into the professional music business where he became a session musician on many studio recordings in New York City and Boston through the late 1990s.

In 2002, after some independent success with his own music, he was signed to a record deal with Melodic Syndrome, a subsidiary label of Sony Records.. It was the early days of the internet, and this new tool facilitated promotion and distribution for the work of independent artists, so Mwalim left the record label just a year later to create his own company Midnight Groove Recordings and release his own work, as well as his collaborations with other established artists. In 2007, his company evolved to become Liberation Music and Midnight Groove Multimedia.

The “Liberation Sessions” as he calls them, led to a prolific discography spanning various musical genres and his 2009 dance hall reggae song, ‘Dem Big Girls’ became an underground hit. His albums have won numerous accolades and awards including nominations in the 2010 Native American Music Awards for Best World Music Album, Best Pop Recording and Best New Male Artist. The same year he won an Urban Music Award for Best Male Jazz Artist.

His 2012 album “Deep Soul Chants & Hollers” an homage to the classic house music scene, received another nomination in the Native American Music awards and a win in the Urban Music Awards. The song “To My Indian Relations” from this album speaks about the loss of spirituality in Native American culture and became a favorite on reservation radio stations throughout the US and Canada.



The Groovalottos



In 2014 Mwalim collaborated with Spirit Wind Records, a Native American record label, to release “Awakened by a Noonday Sun”, a mostly instrumental recording with strong Native American and jazz influences. This recording received a Native American Music Award Nomination for Best Instrumental Recording, won an Urban Music Award and also garnered Mwalim a Silver Arrow Award for Outstanding Contribution to Native Music. He won a second Silver Arrow Award in 2015.

Music is just one of Mwalim’s artistic passions though. As an author he writes poetry and plays. His book “A Mixed Medicine Bag” published by Talking Drum Press, contains original ‘Black Wampanoag Folklore’, his contemporary contribution to the Native American storytelling tradition.

Mwalim’s plays which have been produced are often based on historical events, including “Legacy”, a play about Prince Hall, a noted African American abolitionist, recognized for his leadership in the free black community in Boston during the late 1800s who was also the founder of Prince Hall Freemasonry. “Legacy” will be produced on April 23 by The P.A.C.K (Performing Artists Communication Knowledge) in cooperation with New African Company at William E Reed Auditorium in Dorchester. The Groovalottos can be seen at the Lizard Lounge in Cambridge on February 21 or once a month at Gilda’s Stone Rooster in Marion, MA.

For more information go to [thegroovalottos.com](http://thegroovalottos.com)

**Direct Link:** <http://www.capecod.com/entertainment/the-groovalottos-play-that-funky-native-american-music/>

## Discriminatory Policies: Native Youth and Communities Targeted

02/15/2016 10:04 am ET | **Updated** 2 days ago

---

Amanda Tachine Postdoctoral Scholar, Center for Indian Education, Arizona State University

---



*Co-authored by Shelly C. Lowe (Navajo), Executive Director of Harvard University Native American Program*

Racial discrimination hit the Native American community once again at a recent basketball game in Arizona. This time, non-Native referees officiating a ladies basketball game prohibited the Flagstaff High School varsity girls from wearing their hair in a



Navajo traditional bun, called a tsiiyéél, due to a perceived violation of the Arizona Interscholastic Association (AIA) rules on "hair control devices."

The game concluded the school-wide Native American culture day, a day when numerous Native American cultural activities take place that recognizes and honors Native peoples and traditions. The Flagstaff Lady Eagles Basketball Booster Club, comprised largely of parents and community volunteers, spent hours prior to the game preparing the green and white yarn ties for each player's tsiiyéél. Members of the team, non-Navajo and Navajo, entered the gym with their hair wrapped in the Navajo traditional hairstyle. Before the buzz of the scoreboard ignited tip off, an AIA official ordered each girl to undo her tsiiyéél on the grounds of violating perceived rules and safety regulations. Some of the Navajo players admitted they were, "embarrassed" because they felt targeted and unfairly banned from wearing their hair in a way that they believed symbolizes focus, strength, and recognizes the beauty of Navajo culture.

Unfortunately, this is not novel news, too often following the "rules," "codes," and "policies" negatively targets Native American youth and their community cultural values.

Christian Titman, a member of the Pit River Tribe, was restricted from attaching an eagle feather to his graduation tassel in California. His high school, part of the Clovis Unified School District, had a strict graduation dress code that denied adornments such as leis, rosaries, and necklaces worn by students during graduation ceremonies. Only after suing the California school district for violating his right to freedom of expression and religion, Christian was granted permission to wear an eagle feather.

Hayden Layne, a member of the Delaware Tribe of Indians, was also denied permission to wear an eagle feather during her graduation ceremony in Oklahoma. The Caney Valley School District cited the feather violated school policy which exists to ensure students don't "ignite controversy" with inappropriate decorations. A federal judge agreed with the school district in May of 2015 and Hayden did not wear the eagle feather during graduation.

In support of the Flagstaff Lady Eagles, days later the Dulce High School girl's basketball team in New Mexico took to the court wearing a traditional tsiiyéél. They were also told by referees that, "the way they were wearing their hair was wrong."

These scenarios are occurring in school settings, where Native students are often the lowest performing group when compared to the dominant White population. However, research demonstrates that when Native American students draw on their cultural beliefs, they excel academically and gain a stronger sense of identity that in turn pushes them to be positive and successful members of society.

Proponents of such policies often cite the need to protect students. However, in an effort to create and maintain safe and welcoming school environments, who is truly being protected? In these cases, Native American cultural values are not. Rather, dominant Eurocentric values are.

In a country with a history of purposeful and often violent cultural eradication, the racial targeting experienced by the Native communities in Arizona and across the nation highlights continued discrimination against Native youth and their expressions of cultural pride. Rules, codes, policies must not restrict and devalue the cultures of diverse peoples.

At a national White House conference for Native American youth, First Lady Michelle Obama acknowledged a history of blatant discrimination through regulations that made Native cultures illegal. "Your traditions were systematically targeted for destruction." At this convening, she publicly recognized SaNoah Larocque, a member of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa and an undergraduate student at Harvard College, for successfully appealing to her high school in order to wear an eagle feather on her graduation cap.

As people across the country show their solidarity by wearing tsiyéél, we challenge decision makers to review and modify existing policies that discriminate and devalue the culture of our Native American youth.

**Direct Link:** [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/amanda-tachine/discriminatory-policies-n\\_b\\_9219024.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/amanda-tachine/discriminatory-policies-n_b_9219024.html)

## Pope Denounces Exploitation of Mexico's Indigenous People

BY NICOLE WINFIELD AND SONIA PEREZ D., ASSOCIATED PRESS  
SAN CRISTOBAL DE LAS CASAS, Mexico — Feb 15, 2016, 6:47 PM ET



In this Jan. 16, 2016 photo, Tzotzil Indians participate in a procession in honor of the Christ of Esquipulas, in Chajtoj, in the Mexican state of Chiapas. Pope Francis is celebrating Mexico's Indians on Monday, Feb. 15, with a visit to Chiapas state, where he will preside over a Mass in three native languages. (AP Photo/Eduardo Verdugo)

Pope Francis denounced the centuries-old exploitation and exclusion of Mexico's indigenous people Monday and prayed before the tomb of their controversial priestly protector during a visit heavy in symbolism to the rolling hills of southern Chiapas state.

Francis celebrated a Mass for Mexican Indians that featured readings in the native languages of Chiapas, a traditional dance of prayer and the participation of married indigenous deacons, whose ministry had been suspended by the Vatican but was revived under Francis.

The visit, at the halfway mark of Francis' five-day trip to Mexico, was of great personal importance for the pope. He insisted on visiting San Cristobal de las Casas, where the late Bishop Samuel Ruiz ministered to Mexico's poorest and supported blending their indigenous culture into Catholic rituals, much to the dismay of Mexico's church hierarchy and occasionally the Vatican.

In his homily, Francis denounced how, "in a systematic and organized way," indigenous people have been misunderstood and excluded from society over the course of history.

"Some have considered your values, culture and traditions to be inferior," he said. "Others, intoxicated by power, money and market trends, have stolen your lands or contaminated them."

He called for a collective "Forgive me."

"Today's world, ravaged as it is by a throwaway culture, needs you!" he told the crowd that included many indigenous people, some in traditional dress, who gathered under clear skies at a sports complex in the mountain city of San Cristobal de las Casas.

The soft sounds of marimbas accompanied the Mass, which was celebrated in front of a replica of the brilliant yellow and red facade of the San Cristobal cathedral, where Francis visited later in the day.

At one point, Francis slipped behind the altar where Ruiz's tomb is located and emerged a few minutes later after a brief prayer, said the Vatican spokesman, the Rev. Federico Lombardi.

Crowds chanted "Long live the pope of the poor!" and "Welcome, pope of the struggle!" as he arrived for the Mass. Some 500,000 faithful were expected to see the pope in the city, including about 100,000 who gathered on the dirt field.

The pope has frequently expressed admiration for indigenous peoples, and he issued a sweeping apology last year while in Bolivia for the Catholic Church's colonial-era crimes against America's indigenous.

He has also spoken out about the need to care for the environment. As archbishop in Argentina, he was heavily responsible for a major document of the entire Latin American

church hierarchy in which bishops praised the harmonious way indigenous people live with nature. As pope, he penned an environmental encyclical denouncing the exploitation of the planet by the rich at the expense of the poor.

Indigenous communities have legal rights to much of Mexico's forest and desert lands, and have long battled with outsiders to protect them — and to share in the revenues they produce. Mining and commercial logging interests that were granted concessions by national or state governments long denuded or polluted indigenous lands.

Francis' visit to Chiapas and celebration of native culture was in many ways a swipe at the Mexican church hierarchy, which has long sought to downplay the local culture and bristled at the "Indian church," a mixture of Catholicism and indigenous culture that includes pine boughs, eggs and references to "God the Father and Mother."

It was a tradition that was embraced by Ruiz, who died in 2011 after some 40 years at the helm of the San Cristobal diocese.

Shortly after midnight, worshippers began filing into the site of the Mass, which included readings, prayers and hymns in the three main indigenous languages of Chiapas: Tzeltal, Tzotzil and Chol, which are spoken by just over 1 million people, according to Mexico's latest census.

At the end of the Mass, Francis presented members of the indigenous community with an official Vatican decree formalizing approval for another native language to be used at Mass. The Vatican spokesman said approval for the main languages of Chiapas is still pending, but that the fact that Francis used them in a papal Mass was a sign that they could be used locally.

Francis' predecessor, John Paul II, also dabbled with comments in Indian languages during a 1990 visit to Chiapas, though less formally.

At the end of Mass, indigenous people thanked Francis publicly for the decree and for recognizing their culture.

"The pope's brings us good news for our life," said Maria Perez, a Tzotzal 39-year-old who attended the Mass with her family, who translated Francis' Spanish for her.

Chiapas is Mexico's poorest state. On Monday, the World Bank reported that, on the whole, indigenous people across Latin America continue to suffer from poverty and exclusion, with the wealth gap widening between the indigenous and the rest of Latin American society.

According to government statistics, while about 46 percent of Mexicans were living in poverty in 2014, the number in Chiapas is some 76 percent.

After the Mass, he heard testimony from Chiapas families about the hardships they face. He warned of modern ideologies that seek to destroy the family and called for it to be protected.

Such ideas foster isolation in society and "we end up being colonies of ideologies that destroy the family, the family nucleus that is the healthy base of all society," the pontiff said.

He said he understands that it is not always easy to live in a family but that it is worthwhile trying to do so.

"I prefer a wounded family that strives every day to unite in love to a society sickened by closure and the comfort of fearing to love," he said.

Francis has insisted that his is a "poor church, for the poor."

"He comes to redeem an entire struggle by the people," said the Rev. Marcelino Perez, an indigenous priest who was charged with translating the homily into Tzotzil.

San Cristobal is home to two of the most famed religious defenders of indigenous people in Mexican history: Bishops Bartolome de las Casas in the 16th century and Ruiz, who died in 2011.

Both were beloved by indigenous people and widely reviled among the wealthy classes and much of the church hierarchy. Many officials accused Ruiz of acting on behalf of Zapatista rebels in their 1994 uprising for greater indigenous rights.

Part of the liberation theology movement that swept Latin America after Vatican II, Ruiz tried to fend off the rapid growth of Protestant denominations by adapting to indigenous customs.

One of his controversial measures was to rely heavily on married male lay workers because local culture granted more respect to men with children than to childless, celibate men such as priests. Some in the church worried the married deacons were taking on priestly functions.

In 2002, under Pope John Paul II, the Vatican asked the Chiapas diocese to halt deacon ordinations. But under Francis, the ordinations were renewed and members of the diaconate participated in Monday's Mass.

**Direct Link:** <http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/pope-celebrates-indigenous-chiapas-catholics-dwindle-36941195>

## **First Native American woman appointed judge in U.S. District Court**

By Shawn Price | Feb. 16, 2016 at 7:27 AM



The U.S. Senate voted unanimously Monday to confirm the appointment of Diane Humetewa as the first Native American woman to the U.S. District court. Photo by sergign/Shutterstock

PHOENIX, Feb. 16 (UPI) -- The U.S. Senate unanimously confirmed the appointment of the first Native American woman as judge of a U.S. District Court.

Diane Humetewa, a Hopi, was one of a confirmation of six judges to the federal court bench in Arizona on Monday. Humetewa previously served as U.S. attorney between 2007 and 2009 and was an appellate court judge for the Hopi Tribe and a special counsel and professor at Arizona State University.

She is the third Native American to be named to the federal bench.

"Her appointment is certainly historic," University of Richmond School of Law professor Carl Tobias told USA Today. "She will be the only active Native American judge and the first woman."

Former U.S. Attorney Paul Charlton lauded Humetewa's "extraordinarily sound judgment."

"In this state more than any other, where we have 21 reservations and all felony offenses are tried in federal court, we do not have a bench that reflects the community it serves," Charlton said. "And now, for the first time in our nation's history, we'll have a representative to the bench."

The National Congress of American Indians issued a statement: "There are many qualified, talented people like Diane Humetewa in Indian country who are able and willing to serve. We eagerly anticipate many more nominations of native people to the federal bench and other offices."

Chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, Sen. Jon Tester, D-Mt., declared Humetewa "an inspiration to Native people" in a statement. "As the only Native American in active service on the federal bench, Diane provides much-needed expertise on the complexities of federal law and Indian sovereignty."

**Direct Link:** [http://www.upi.com/Top\\_News/US/2016/02/16/First-Native-American-woman-appointed-judge-in-US-District-Court/1981455618068/](http://www.upi.com/Top_News/US/2016/02/16/First-Native-American-woman-appointed-judge-in-US-District-Court/1981455618068/)

## **OPINION: Native American education bill sees rare support in SD Senate**

By [Sen. Troy Heinert](#) on Feb 16, 2016 at 11:04 a.m.

I was proud to be the prime sponsor of Senate Bills 81 and 82. This legislation designed to improve Native American education sailed through the Senate with only one dissenting vote. That's 34-1, which is a rare occurrence.

SB 81 and 82 establish an achievement schools grant program for up to three schools and a paraprofessional tuition scholarship for personnel seeking their teacher license working at Native American schools. One positive influence the achievement schools program hopes to make is preserving Native American languages. As I testified on the Senate floor, "When you lose your language, you lose your culture. When you lose your culture, you lose your identity."

Senate Bill 9 will be voted on later in the session. It is the all-important component that funds both programs, so it will be critical that the broad support behind these two pieces of legislation continues during the appropriations process.

Solving the school funding problems in our state is a major focus of this session. The governor's office has proposed several different measures, such as capping reserves and establishing reporting requirements to ensure new money is allocated to increasing teacher pay. Democrats are generally supportive of these efforts, but continue to believe a higher target salary average of \$50,000 is necessary to solve South Dakota's teacher shortage problem. Our proposal moves South Dakota to third in our six-state region, allowing us to meaningfully compete with our neighbor states. After all, especially in the southern parts of District 26, we are more likely to lose teachers to Nebraska than to Mississippi or Alabama.

There has been some talk by House Republicans to put forth a proposal to provide a much smaller increase in K-12 dollars under the current formula, rather than support a more comprehensive plan to address the issue now. In my opinion, such a small step will be a mistake at this juncture. It's not what the public wants, or ultimately, what our students need. We must put politics aside and work together to figure out a way to raise teacher pay.

I am proud to co-sponsor HB 1227, whose prime sponsor in the House is Rep. Paula Hawks. This bill would establish the S.D. Government Accountability Committee, a 12-member board to oversee questions of ethics or conflict of interest violations. The board would have two legislators from the minority party in each house, two from the majority party in each house, and four legislators appointed from the governor's office, two from the majority party and two from the minority party.



By providing a balanced committee to review ethical and mismanagement questions, state government is protected from the perception that the majority party with controlling interest on current committees will merely "turn a blind eye." Tax dollars are supposed to be used for services. When there is mismanagement of the funds, there is a propensity for abuse. The Center for Public Integrity gave South Dakota an "F" on ethics just last November. The recent tragedies in our state, including EB-5 and Gear Up, will never be cleared up unless we have a politically balanced ethics board given the task to follow the money.

I will be the prime sponsor in the Senate, joined by Rep. Julie Bartling from Gregory calling for changes to the Gear Up program. This program was originally intended to provide scholarships to Native American students to pursue higher education. However, the state of South Dakota through the Department of Education actually asked for a waiver so the grant money would not be used for scholarships. Our bill (HB 1220) would allow for a reversal of the waiver and allow grant funding to be used to fund scholarships for Native American students.

Although the number of Democrats in the Legislature is small, our efforts on issues like teacher pay, Medicaid expansion and tribal issues are being recognized by our Republican colleagues. We have proven we are able to get our point across by building consensus on an issue. Often this approach leads to results in a way that confrontation and political posturing is unable to achieve. For the sake of our great state, civility among legislators is essential to good governance.

White River will host a cracker barrel at 6 p.m. Feb. 19 at the Museum. Please join us at any of these locations. I work for you and would appreciate any input.

You can always contact me with your questions and concerns. Please let me hear from you. You may reach me by phone at (605) 319-6570 or email at [Sen.Heinert@state.sd.us](mailto:Sen.Heinert@state.sd.us).

**Direct Link:** <http://www.mitchellrepublic.com/opinion/columns/3949023-opinion-native-american-education-bill-sees-rare-support-sd-senate>

## **Young Mongolian Eagle Huntress Spiritually Adopted Into Native American Tribe**

By DANI HAYES · 23 HOURS AGO



The Eagle Huntress is a documentary about a young girl from northwest Mongolia. During the premier of the documentary at the Sundance Film Festival in January, she was honored by being spiritually adopted into a Native American tribe.

For the past 2,000 years, only men have been allowed to participate in the sport of eagle hunting. This all changed when a 13-year-old girl, daughter of a Master Eagle Hunter, broke from tradition and learned the trade of her father. The Eagle Huntress documents the life of a Muslim girl named Aisholpan, filled with underlining themes of trailblazing and female empowerment. Stacey Reiss is one of the producers of the film.

“I think we need more heroines. I think we need more female role models – people that are doing things that young children, boys and girls, can look up to – can be inspired by and I thought that her drive and her bravery to do something that had never been done before in 2,000 years. And also her father’s ability to support her and give her a strong foundation. I just thought that this story about a father and a daughter and her story was just one that needed to be shared with many people.”

Traditionally Reiss says eagle hunting is an ancient art passed on from father to son.



“I think what Agalai, Aisholpan’s father did is quite remarkable. I’d say he’s an evolved person. But I think really what it was, it was about their relationship. He saw that she was working hard, wanted to do chores with him outside. She just kept asking and she just had this natural ability and connection with his bird. He saw that and he agreed to start training her.”

In January, Aisholpan and her parents flew to Park City where they attended the premier of the film where a ceremony was held in their honor. Dressed in traditional fur, Aisholpan and her family were greeted by two representatives of the Comanche Tribe of Oklahoma who also brought an eagle. In recognition of the similarities between the Mongolian nomadic tribe and this Native American tribe, Aisholpan was honored with a ceremonial blessing and gifting of a name by Comanche representative Waha Thuweeka.

“We consider the people of Mongolia relations to us. They’re a horse culture, not too much unlike ours and that’s very near and dear to us. With the experience with the eagles, we’re connected by the energy of the living bird. It’s multi-faceted why this is important to support this documentary that features this wonderful way of life but to claim the relationship by sharing a historical name with her.”



The backdrop for the ceremony was a Native American yurt. Waha Thuweeka created smoke by burning dried juniper on a hot coal. The juniper tree is a symbol of strength for the Comanche people.

“The smoke is considered a vehicle for carrying our prayers and petitions to the Almighty. Smoke continues rising, that’s why so many cultures call on smoke for prayerful activities. We combine the offering of the smoke with the energy of the eagle. That’s why the eagle feathers are used to dispatch our prayers and petitions to travel on that smoke to the Almighty. And with the historical belief that only the eagle can fly high enough and far enough to see the face of God. That’s why our people have to call on the energy of the eagle for this purpose.”

With the use of an eagle feather, he directed the rising smoke on to Aisholpan and gives her the name.

Her Comanche name translates to Golden Eagle Hunting Woman.

“She started this as a child but it’s taken her into the realm of womanhood.”

The whistle being used is made out of a wing bone from an eagle. It’s typical for the hunters to use these whistles while training their eagles. They faced north, east, south and west presenting Aisholpan’s new Comanche name.

The Eagle Huntress has been picked up by Sony Pictures Classics. There's also talk to turn the documentary into an animated feature with executive producer Daisy Ridley, from *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*, as the voice of the young heroine. Click [here](#) to hear a conversation with the director Otto Bell on Access Utah.

**Direct Link:** <http://upr.org/post/young-mongolian-eagle-huntress-spiritually-adopted-native-american-tribe>

## **Native American Tribe Connected to Big Land Purchase in Washington County Along I-94**

**Jay Kolls**

*Updated: 02/17/2016 7:08 AM*

*Created: 02/16/2016 9:22 PM*

The owner of an 80-acre parcel in Washington County told 5 EYEWITNESS NEWS he sold his property to an investment company affiliated with a Native American tribe.

"The real estate agent told me the investment company is operated by one of the local Native American tribes," Bruce Mogren said.

The land is the site of the Mogren Sod Farm, which was owned and operated by Bruce Mogren's father and uncle.

It sits just north of the Holiday gas station at the Manning Avenue exit off Interstate 94 in West Lakeland Township on the east side of Manning Avenue.

Across the road, to the west, is the city limits of Lake Elmo.

The land records at the Washington County Government Center list the new owner as Four Sisters Investments, LLC.

The address for the company is 225 South Sixth Street in Minneapolis, which is the Capella Tower.

There are many law offices in the Capella Tower but no listing of Four Sisters as a tenant.

Mogren did ask about future plans. "They did not indicate they were going to build a casino there, but did tell me it was a long-term investment," Mogren said.

KSTP-TV contacted the tribe that owns Mystic Lake Casino in Prior Lake and were to they had not bought any land in Washington County.

We also called the Tribal Council that owns Treasure Island Casino in Red Wing, but did not receive a call back.

**Direct Link:** <http://kstp.com/news/native-american-tribe-connected-to-washington-county-land-purchase-along-interstate-94-casino/4050104/>

## **Native American Tribes to Receive \$660 Million for Housing**

*February 16, 2016 10:29 pm | Equal Voice News*

Affordable housing efforts for 587 Native American tribes in dozens of states have received a boost of \$660 million in federal money, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development announced on Tuesday.



The money is part of the Indian Housing Block Grant program, which is the single largest source of affordable housing help for Native American communities, HUD officials said. The money will go to low-income families on Indian reservations or in Alaska Native or American Indian communities.

Officials released the full list of tribes in 35 states that will receive money. For example, the Hopi Tribe in Arizona is set to receive more than \$6.1 million to help members with housing. While the Pueblo of Zuni in New Mexico will receive more than \$2.8 million, the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians in Mississippi will be able to use more than \$3.1 million for housing.

In California, the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria will be able to use more than \$874,300 to help its members with housing.

These grants can be used for housing development, housing services for eligible families and individuals, crime prevention and safety, housing management services, assistance for housing developed under the Housing Act of 1937 and innovative approaches to solving affordable housing problems, officials said.

“Tribes use this funding to build new homes, or to solve their most pressing housing issues,” Julian Castro, secretary for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, said in a statement. “Our partnerships with tribal communities and leaders are critical today to help ensure better housing, neighborhoods and economic opportunities for tomorrow.”

This specific federal housing program, officials said, have helped Native American tribes acquire a total of nearly 37,000 affordable homes and rehabilitate about 77,000 housing units. The amount of each grant was based on a formula that took into consideration tribal needs and housing already under management.

In addition to the \$660 million in grants, federal housing officials on Friday announced \$55.5 million in housing assistance for 75 Native American communities. Those housing grants were provided under the Indian Community Development Block Grant program.

Robert T. Coulter, executive director of the Indian Law Resource Center, has said that 36 percent of American Indian families live in poverty, higher than the 9 percent rate for all other families. For Native women with children, he said, the poverty rate is nearly 57 percent.

He has [called on U.S. laws to help end poverty](#) in Indian country.

See more at: <http://www.equalvoiceforfamilies.org/native-american-tribes-to-receive-660-million-for-housing/#sthash.r8l4ABrX.dpuf>

## **Native American discussion series addresses tribes' sovereignty**

By MIKE FERGUSON [mferguson@billingsgazette.com](mailto:mferguson@billingsgazette.com)

Updated 15 hrs ago

Robinson briefly recounted the history of the Northern Cheyenne moving into Canada, then into the Great Lakes region before settling in the American plains.

“We have stuck to our ways and kept our language and our primary ceremonies,” he said, even after the U.S. government made and then, he said, broke all eight treaties that the government signed with the tribe.

Robinson’s ancestor, the peace chief Black Kettle, was killed in November 1868 in Washita, Okla., by troops led by George Armstrong Custer.

“They tried to keep us in Oklahoma, but our people escaped, got caught, then escaped again and made it back to our land” in southeastern Montana, “444,000 acres of beautiful land with game you guys can’t get,” Robinson said with a smile.

Robinson traced U.S. legal thinking on tribal sovereignty back to John Marshall, the fourth chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.

“What he came up with is that we have internal sovereignty, but we don’t have the authority to exercise our sovereignty with any state or any other nation. He said that we were ‘sovereign dependent,’ (calling Native tribes in one opinion “domestic dependent nations”) which really doesn’t make any sense.”

Ever since the 1934 Indian Reorganization Act, “we have had two governments — a sovereign government and a Bureau of Indian Affairs, or agency, government,” Robinson said. “We can use the money from the bureau in a good way, but what is lacking for us is working on our infrastructure.”

All people, he said, carry around the weight of “knowing we are sovereign and free, but having this inability to connect with each other. The one thing I see that’s absent is having a better understanding of who we are, as cultures and human beings. I enjoy this kind of communication, because we all keep coming back hoping that a door will open.”

Citing a 2014 article he wrote, Jawort noted that just after the writers of the Declaration of Independence talk about everyone being created equal and being endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, is found this complaint about King George III of England: He has “excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavored to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian savages, whose known rule of warfare is undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.”

“Pause right there,” Jawort said. “Does the most famous document in American history really state ‘All men are created equal,’ then hypocritically proclaim right afterward its first inhabitants are ‘merciless Indian savages?’”

“I’ve always compared Native American rights to a sword of Damocles hanging over our heads,” he said. “Montana tribes are trapped in a system that is not working.”

But Jawort said he doesn’t favor abolishing reservations and “becoming mainstream.”

“People fought hard for those little pieces of land,” he said.

**Direct Link:** [http://billingsgazette.com/news/local/native-american-discussion-series-addresses-tribes-sovereignty/article\\_eb1047b7-2e55-50e5-9b30-31b362953e8b.html](http://billingsgazette.com/news/local/native-american-discussion-series-addresses-tribes-sovereignty/article_eb1047b7-2e55-50e5-9b30-31b362953e8b.html)

## **All Nations Network, a Cable Outlet for Native Peoples, Wants to Launch in U.S.**



FEBRUARY 18, 2016 | 06:00AM PT

**Brian Steinberg**

Senior TV Editor



A non-profit Canadian cable network that programs for aboriginal peoples hopes to do the same in the United States for Native American viewers.

Aboriginal Peoples Television Network, a cable channel based in Canada that is dedicated exclusively to content for indigenous peoples, intends to work to launch All Nations Network, a similar outlet in the United States that will develop and air TV programs written, produced, and directed by Native Americans, among others. Network distribution in the U.S. is being represented by Castalia Communications.

The company declined to offer specific information about launch timelines or carriage agreements.

“We think the time is right for Native Americans to have their own channel,” says Jean La Rose, APTN’s Chief Executive Officer (*pictured, above*), in a prepared statement. “Certainly, our experience in Canada has been one of creating and providing opportunities for our producers, for our storytellers, to tell our stories, in our words, to our Peoples and to the world. Native American producers are poised and eager to have the same opportunities, and we believe that we can work together to provide a unique window into the lives — past, present and future — of this community.” Among the programs APTN has shown in Canada are “Mohawk Girls,” a scripted comedy-drama that has been likened to a “Sex and the City” for Native peoples; “Rabbit Fall,” a supernatural series; and “Anash and the Legacy of the Sun-Rock,” a kids’ series based on Tlingit stories about maintaining principles.

APTN reaches approximately 10 million Canadian households and commercial establishments. It runs children’s animation, youth, cultural and traditional programming, music, drama, news and current affairs, as well as live coverage of special events and interactive programming. Nearly half of APTN programming is exclusive and not shown on any other outlet.

The new U.S. network will be headquartered in New Mexico. Native American filmmaker Chris Eyre will work closely with All Nations Network to launch in the United States.

**Direct Link:** <http://variety.com/2016/tv/news/all-nations-network-native-american-programming-aptn-1201709055/>

## **Moya-Smith: Native Americans Are Forced to Speak Up, Disrupt**

Simon Moya-Smith  
2/17/16

Soon, the Obamas will vacate the premises, and the only thing that seems certain at this point in the primaries is that the White House will lose color in January 2017. Right. Back to white. That bumbling brain surgeon, Ben Carson, doesn't have a prayer of making it to the general election. He should bow out now and realize that Trump The Troll "speaks to the snake" in Americans. Even Sir Jeb, of the Bush Dynasty – try as he might, hasn't the capabilities of besting The Troll ... because there are very few people on the this fading globe who can naturally parselmouth their way to power.

Make no mistake though, folks, this presidential race is a savage thrashing for the American throne, which sits precariously atop a crumbling foundation, sinking soil. Indeed. And so far the only one who's championing environmental protection like a hippie on hash is Bernie Sanders, the loud Jew who frightens Christians back into their churches where they pray to God that the next American family to buy the crown will protect the fundamental rights of their semiautomatics.

But what about the rights of Native Americans?

What about Native Americans IN GENERAL?

I know I'm not the only indigenous skull who notices that whenever these POTUS candidates, GOP or Dem, rip and roar about justice and rights and equality, Native Americans routinely do not make it into their revered diversity list.

You know the list: Black, Latino, LGBTQ, women, veterans ... and that's it. Don't hold your breath, chum. Better luck next time, right? Ah, shit. We know better. All of us. ... It's the same list CEOs use during annual gatherings when they pat themselves firmly on the ass for the company's "inclusive excellence," and then head out for lobster tails and cocktails with their criminal buddies.

Later, that same CEO bastard will claim to be "a quarter Native American." Goddamn. These wretched jackasses.

But back to presidential hopefuls who omit Native Americans in their campaign speeches.

Are these old folks just being forgetful? Or are they blatantly excluding Native Americans? Maybe they've just got really shitty campaign staffers whose brains are slowly collapsing under the mounting weight of fast food.

In any case, we get it: In comparison to all the other minority groups in this country, at 5.2 million, Native Americans are an extremely small percentage of the overall American vote. ... Earlier, we were mentioning the certainty that the White House will lose color next year. So here's another certainty for you: If these throne seekers won't mention and include Native Americans in their speeches, then fuck it. We'll mention ourselves.

Last week, two Native Americans, American Indian Movement leader Clyde Bellecourt, and activist Ashley Fairbanks, both spoke up at separate Bernie rallies in the Twin Cities,

thrusting the Native American voice into a presidential race that has largely ignored Indian country.

“Are you going to honor the treaties?” [Bellecourt asked into a mic](#), to which Bernie, who was by then standing and waving goodbye to the crowd, responded, “I think Native American people have gotten a terrible deal from the federal government. I will do everything I can to redress that. Absolutely.”

Later that day, Bernie allegedly mentioned only blacks and Latinos during a speech on the disproportionate number of minority prisoners in the United States. Fairbanks, who was sitting only feet from the lectern, heckled.

“I yelled out from the front row ‘and Natives!’ And he repeated, ‘And Native Americans,’” Fairbanks wrote on her Facebook page.

Understand that this is necessary behavior. Native Americans in public schools and universities and conference rooms, and, yes, at political stump speeches across this country are left with no other option than to stand up, interrupt, and be recognized by those who cannot spot a Native American unless we saunter in donning bells and braids and beads and breastplates.

“Jeezus, that’s an Indian?” such sots say. “But he’s got a beard, and he’s in shoes. Where’s his long hair? Wait. Wait a minute. What’s his last name? ... That’s not an Indian name. ... Huh. I never would’ve guessed.”

Eight years we’ve nearly had with the Obamas, and only in the latter part of his presidency did Mr. Obama grow an “emotional” investment in Native American communities. Now, sadly, once again, we are left raising our hands in the clamoring crowd, reminding these presidential hopefuls that Native Americans are still here. We may not always look like the ones John Wayne hunted and killed for pleasure. We sure as shit don’t look like Chief Wahoo of the Cleveland Indians. But, goddamnit, we are still here! And to ignore the Native American on OUR ancestral land is a gross offense to our continued existence and resiliency.

It also shows us how important we are to these people. Think about it: In such a tight race between Bernie and Hillary, the Native American vote may be that which tips the balance and sends one of them into the general election – possibly the White House. So they better start playing nice. Damn right.

In the meantime, here’s to Ashley Fairbanks and Clyde Bellecourt for disrupting and disturbing the status quo, and who, on that day, penetrated the incomplete diversity list.

Now, time to shape my beard, buy some new shoes, and get a haircut. Later.

*Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2016/02/17/moya-smith-native-americans-are-forced-speak-disrupt-163452>*